MANUAL ON THE BRONZES

IN THE GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI

A TYPOLOGICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE BRONZES
DISPLAYED IN THE RE-ORGANISED BRONZE GALLERY

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FOREWORD

South India is the cradle of civilisation. The theory is that civilisation existed here more than 10,000 - 15,000 years before the present. It has a highly advanced civilisation, which has produced its famous temples, which serve as repositories of architecture, art and culture. The sculptures, bronzes, paintings and even the murals show by their highly stylised features that they are the flowers and fruit of this highly evolved civilisation. Some of the works of art of this culture, which were either buried in the soil or found neglected due to the passage of time have been collected and deposited in the Government Museum, Chennai (Madras).

The Government Museum, Chennai is one of the great museums of the world. It stands second in India in terms of age and the size of its collection. The completion of the 151st Year of this Museum is a landmark event not only in its history, but also in the world of museology. A series of events were proposed to commemorate this occasion on the model of the Centenary Celebration held in 1951 AD. About Rs.4 Crores have been spent on renovating the museum theatre, the compound wall (both heritage structures) and also the galleries, besides setting up a new gallery called 'Exposition on the Progress of Industry and Handicrafts in Tamilnadu'. This has been set up at the instance of the Chief Minister and the President of India.

The Bronze Gallery of this museum has the best collection of bronzes in the world. This gallery along with the Numismatic Gallery and the Gallery on Chemical Conservation, which are situated in the same building have been modernised with the latest technology in display. Air conditioning and renovation of the Bronze Gallery building and the Contemporary Art Gallery building has been done at the instance of the Chief Minister. Their lighting has been made on par with the best museums in the world like the British Museum, Louvre etc. using fibre-optic lighting and other similar most up-to-date technologies. Simulation of the cosmic dance of the *Nataraja* on the ground floor and of a *Vaishnava* temple *mandapa* atmosphere on the first floor transport the visitor into near virtual reality. Use of the latest technology in showcase design has transformed traditional teak showcases into modern ones. This has saved a lot of money by reusing the old showcases. Technology from abroad has been adopted and adapted with in-house design to suit Chennai conditions. This process has resulted in the design of new showcases based on German modular aluminium (Octanorm type) and British wood design (Click type). They have been called K brand in Chennai since they are quite different from the originals even in outside looks let alone internals. The design of these galleries was done by Computer Aided Design and Three Dimensional Modelling. It is perhaps the first time in the world that such techniques have been used in the staid world of museums. A video-room to show documentaries on bronze making etc., and a computer based Video- surveillance for security are other additions. This has made the display world-class.

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The technical work has been done by Dr.R.Kannan, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Museums, who was also in charge of Archaeology earlier. His technical work and publications have been internationally recognised by his being made an invited Board Member of the Association of International Museums of History at Paris.

Documentation of the collections is an important work of a Museum as a purveyor of knowledge in addition to entertaining visitors. The Government Museum, Chennai, has a tradition of original and path breaking publications to its credit. Some of the notable Indologists like Dr.George Bidie, Dr.Aiyappan, Dr.Thurston, T.N.Ramachandran, C.Sivaramamurthi and others worked in this Museum and wrote books, which have become standard reference material in their fields.

In keeping with this tradition, more than a dozen publications have been brought out for the 151st Anniversary celebrations. These have World-class photography and printing, though the cost is a fraction of even Indian costs.

This manual on the reorganised Bronze Gallery documents about 220 pieces which is one of the largest in a single book so far. It gives an introduction to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religions. It then describes the process of bronze making . It goes on to give the typological description of the images. It then describes each image that is displayed. It also has a glossary of Sanskrit and Tamil iconography related words. This is a ready reference for any scholar. The philosophy, theosophy, literature and other research works on sculpture etc., have been used to describe and analyse the underlying thought behind each piece. There is also an attempt to put the Iconography into a comparative context by comparing with similar strands of thought in the other ancient religions of Indian origin, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism etc. Many new facts and ideas have been discovered and presented. The presentation of colour photographs of the bronzes in the collection is valuable both for historical purposes as a record and for scholars in far away places to see and compare.

Dr.Kannan has written several important books and monographs earlier. Some of these are Documentation on the Cannons in the collection of the Government Museum, Chennai (1999 AD), Monograph on Holistic Dating (2000 AD), Iconography of Jain Images in the Government Museum, Chennai (2001 AD) and Iconography of Jain Images in the districts of Tamilnadu (2002 AD). Besides he has edited the Journal of the Museum, written several articles and papers which have been published among others in the Annual Journals of the Museums Association of India and in the 6th International Colloquium at Lahti, Finland in 2002. He is in the expert committee on use of power tools set up under the aegis of the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai. He has also participated and contributed papers in International Seminars on Conservation. He has written, edited and published several colourful brochures on the museum and its several galleries.

The publications made for the 151st Anniversary (2002-2003) apart from this book are:

1. Manual on the Numismatic Gallery in the Government Museum, Chennai.
2. Monograph on the Rock and Cave Art Gallery in the Government Museum, Chennai
3. A Manual on the Holographic Gallery in the Government Museum, Chennai
4. Documentation of the text of the Son - et - lumiére on the Rock and Cave Art Gallery in English and Tamil (2 books)
5. Documentation of the text of the Video clips on the Touch Screen on the Rock and Cave Art Gallery
6. Souvenir
7. Manual on the progress on Industry and Handicrafts in Tamilnadu Gallery (being written)

Brochures

1. Brochure on the Rock and Cave Art Gallery
2. Brochure on the Botany Gallery
3. Brochure on the Bronze Gallery

Videos

1. Bronze making
2. The Museum through the ages (from the 1950s till the present)
3. Retrieving from the Archives the movie on the museum produced in 1971, converting it into CD and subtitling it in English.
4. Rock and Cave Art
5. Video on the museum in general (present)
6. History of Industry and Handicrafts in Tamilnadu (being made)

The publications have been listed so that if some of them are lost in the future then, this list will be valuable. This is the first time in the history of any museum that so many publications are being brought out within such short span of time of about six to eight months. This is apart from the work of setting up and reorganising galleries referred to above. In addition Dr.Kannan has been giving technical advice when sought on how to renovate the heritage structures like the theatre, compound wall etc.,so that it is done by the Public Works Department according to Archaeological principles. He was the only person to correctly identify the red stone used in the compound wall and the National Art Gallery building as Satyavedu (Andhra) stone and not Rajasthan stone as was thought by even Engineering research scholars. I compliment Dr.Kannan for this prolific output of publications, which is efflorescence within a short period of time for the Government Museum, Chennai. I am sure that it will be a valuable reference work in the field in the years to come.

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(Mrs.Lakshmi Pranesh)

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PREFACE

The Government Museum, Chennai completes its one hundred and fifty-first year in 2003 AD. The Government desired to celebrate it in a fitting manner on the lines of the Centenary Celebration in 1951 AD, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India took part as the chief guest. The Bronze Gallery has been reorganised. Its display has been modernised. The latest technology available has been used to make the display techniques adopted to be on par with those in the best museums of the world. This gallery houses some of the most famous South Indian bronzes in the world. Its collection is also considered one of the best in the world.

The work was started in November 2002 and completed by the end of March 2003. This quick pace of execution was preceded by detailed planning, which included Computer Aided Design and Three Dimensional Modelling. A Virtual Gallery and showcases were first created which was later on translated into reality. This is perhaps the first use of such techniques in the world of museums.

It was felt that museum publications had also undergone a technology transformation in recent years as evidenced by the book, Iconography of Jain Images in two parts in 2001 and 2002 published with world class colour photography and execution. The profile of visitors has also changed. Especially, the foreign visitors for whom the gallery is a must-see, demand a world-class reference to carry home. Therefore, this new manual, which would easily lead to the newly redisplayed gallery, has been published. I have included newly researched material so that it would not be a mere reproduction of the old books or a coffee- table book but also a book with all the knowledge intensity usually associated with our museum publications. This Manual has also been written within the same tight timetable as the reorganisation and redisplay.

Thiru K.Lakshmi Narayanan, Assistant Director, Thiru R. Balasubramanian and Thiru J.R.Asokan, Curators have assisted me in the work of re-organising the gallery by working very long hours. The former two, Thiru K. Sekar, Curator and Thiru Ramesh have helped to bring out this publication. Both items of work together meant working nonstop for six months including on all holidays along with me.

I hope this book serves tourists and also kindles enough interest in them to buy our more advanced scholarly research publications written by the great scholars of yester-years like F.H.Gravely, T.N.Ramachandran, C.Sivaramamurti, P.R. Srinivasan and others which are considered definitive works. This work has used their material for reference in the descriptive part, since there is no purpose in reinventing the wheel. The introductory part, which is the theory part, is largely based on the work of this writer published as Occasional Papers in the Museum Journal, Bulletins of the Museum and Seminar Papers. Any suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Chennai - 600 008.
31-3-2003

(Dr. R. KANNAN, Ph.D., I.A.S.)

To

The memory of late Sri. T.S. Padmanabha Iyer (Retd.) Superintending Engineer (P.W.D) British India & Composite Madras State, my grandfather on his centenary (1901 - 2001) and my uncle late Sri. P. Subramanian. Also to Ms. Lalitha, my mother, Mrs. Seetha, my wife, Master Sridar Padmanabhan, my son and Ms. Shrikalaa, my daughter for their encouiagement and help.

Dr. R. Kannan, Ph.D., I.A.S.

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Thiru K.Lakshminarayanan, Assistant Director, Thiru R.Balasubramanian, Curator for Archaeology for their untiring help. Miss. Aparna Ganapathy, Assistant Curator, Thiru Ramesh, Technical Assistant, Tmt. Sasikala and Tmt. Tara, Typists also rendered assistance.

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HOW TO REFER TO THIS MANUAL

The first part gives an introduction to Indian culture especially Tamil culture and how Art and Architecture symbolise Indian philosophy. Iconography symbolising the culture, mythology and the metaphysical i.e. explaining as Objective Correlatives, Indian philosophy is then explained. It then describes how sculpture transformed into Bronzes, their methods of casting and their dating.

The second part gives the descriptive details of the bronzes, with sufficient background material to place them in their mythological, philosophical and iconographic context. They are sub-classified into *Buddhist, Jain, Brahma, Saiva* and *Vaishnava* bronzes. The *Nataraja* bronzes though they are *Saiva* bronzes are given a separate section as they are numerous, they are the pride of India and the world. The museum has the best collection in the world. They are also, therefore, displayed in a separate section. The bronzes are listed in alphabetical order within each section for ease of reference.

In modern museology, displays are not constant but kept constantly changing except for a few leading trademark pieces. In the Government Museum, Chennai, the *Ardhanariswara* from *Tiruvengadu*, Mayiladuthurai (*Mayuram*) Taluk, Nagapattinam District and the *Nataraja* from *Tiruvelangadu*, Tiruttani Taluk, Tiruvallur District and some similar bronzes would fit this category of leading bronzes. This may kindly be borne in mind by the visitor when referring to this manual. Still, a large number of the bronzes in our collection are documented here. Even the new pieces would have to be mostly from one of the types described here. Therefore, this manual would be useful to the layperson and scholar alike.

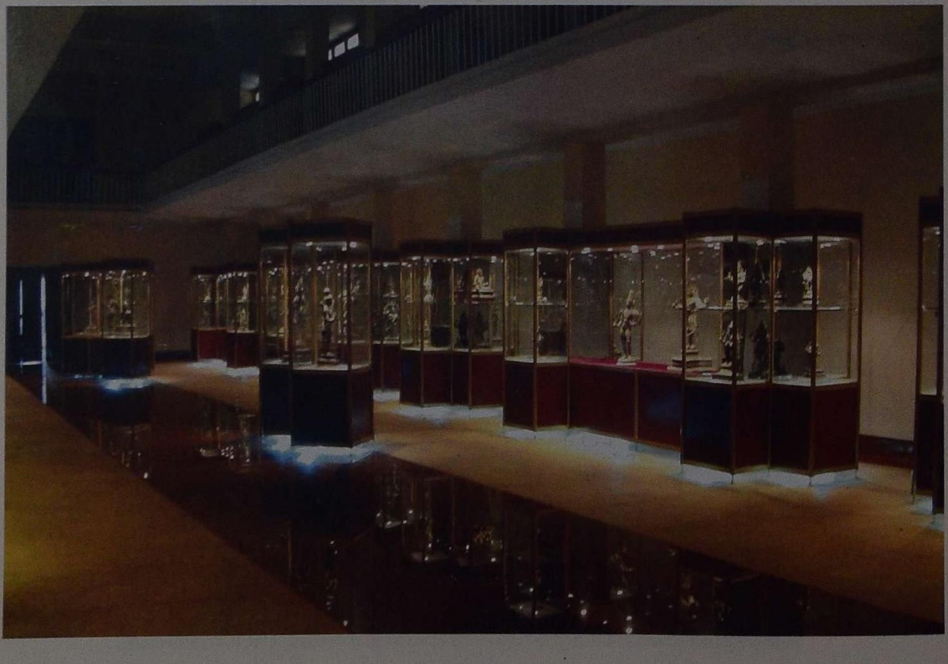
A glossary of Indian language words especially Sanskrit and Tamil has been prepared for ease of reference of technical terms used in Iconography.

Nataraja in the Cosmos
New Technology has been used for this display that simulates the Cosmos

Vaishnava Temple atmosphere -
simulated on the first floor of the Bronze Gallery

▲
Bronze Gallery - Ground Floor - Hi-tech show case (German type) and Mezzanine Floor - Traditional & K Brand show cases (English type)

Bronze Gallery - Ground Floor - Another view - Hi-tech show cases (German type)
▼



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Introduction

The ancient and rich civilisation that is India was at the forefront of philosophy and science at certain periods in its hoary past. Its metaphysical thought was translated into physical phenomena based on technology that was far ahead of its time. The culture that this civilisation gave rise to can be seen transformed into physical form in the architecture and sculpture especially the bronzes in South India and Tamilnadu in particular.

The bronzes are considered as the product of the most advanced technology of their time. They represent the flowering of culture. The Bronze Gallery of the Government Museum, Chennai draws visitors from all over the world as it is considered to have the best collection of bronzes in the world. This Gallery has been reorganised for the 151st Anniversary celebrations of the museum. Its display and lighting has been modernised to be on par with the displays of the best museums of the world. This Manual to the Bronze Gallery has been prepared so that visitors can easily know the background behind each of the icons on display. This will also serve as basic scholarly material on the bronzes, their origin and the technology behind them. The South Indian bronzes of the Government Museum, Chennai represent most of the South Indian art schools under three major Indian Religions - *Hinduism, Buddhism* and *Jainism*. In this reorganised Bronze Gallery, the two major Hindu sects i.e. *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism* are represented in the ground floor, the *Nataraja,* the Buddhist and Jain icons in the mezzanine floor and some more *Vaishnavite* and other icons in the first floor.

Art as part of life in India

Art in India was intertwined with other aspects of life throughout the history of India. This is evident from the literary and archaeological evidence that has been obtained. This continuity could be maintained only because the tradition itself had an inbuilt paradigm of adjusting to change. It constantly adapted itself to changing times

and places, new rulers and the culture that they brought with them, while adhering to certain underlying principles, which were perennial and immutable.

Ancient Tamilnadu

Tamil Nadu stretches from lower Andhra Pradesh to the tip of *Kanyakumari*. "In fanciful legends are covered its misty dawns. Only a couple of thousands of years of its history is known to us in bits and pieces." We have only glimpses from its past because marine archaeology has not been used to corroborate Tamil literature as *Dwaraka* in Gujarat has been explored under the sea to validate the *Mahabharata*. Therefore, much of its hoary past and memories of lands swallowed by the sea are dismissed as myths. Yet history shows some myths become classified as reality when archaeologically explored. The land is the cradle of civilisation having links with the *Dwaraka* of the *Mahabharata* and even before. This is borne out by modern DNA analysis of *homo-sapiens*.

It is clear that the Proto-Tamil population started civilisation in the vast jungles in ancient times. They created hamlets and villages and towns and then an advanced urban civilisation. The challenge before every human being from peasant to the king was the mystery of life. In his essential loneliness, man faced nature when it was benevolent and violent. The dark nights in the jungles, the hot sun, the windstorms, cyclones and death were daily living images. He had to conquer fear by gathering his inner strength which he named as "soul". In the image of the mother who gave birth, the hero brother and the Gods of the ancestors, he tried to assert mastery over all overpowering nature. When he became helpless before the fury of nature, he went and joined hands in prayer first to nature. Then gradually as civilisation advanced, nature became God to be propitiated. Then God was personified as the consecrated idol to be worshipped. It became the image of power, later beneficence and finally the liberating force from the cycle of births and deaths.

Signs (*Tantra* and *mudras*), geometric symbols (*Chakras*), shrines (temples) and the worship through these of the Gods (idols)were to get the help of the supernatural powers hidden behind the mystery of nature.

Art and Architecture symbolising Indian philosophy

Indian architecture, whether Buddhist *Stupas* or Hindu and Jain temples are an orchestra with multiple forms flowing out of and into a centre. It is like an epic poem in brick and stone symbolising the infinite or God. Each detail can be separated but it is in fact not independent. It is part of the whole, interwoven and interlinked. Seen as a whole, it represents heaven and earth, the central mountain (*Mahameru*) and the cosmic order on earth. The mood is one of wonder (*vismaya*). It is meant to give a transcendental experience of bliss. The observer or participant or pilgrim moves from the outside to the inside, circumnambulates the *stupa* or temple until he reaches the centre (*brahmastana*) or apogee which represents the ultimate void, *sunya, nirvana* or *moksha* (Black hole in modern physics). Inside the sanctum or *garbhagraha* of any temple, *sthirabhera* or fixed deities usually of stone are installed. These *sthirabheras* were usually made of stone though originally nearly several thousand years ago they were made of lighter materials like wood. Alberuni (1878) in his *Indica,* records one such famous temple to the Sun God, *Aditya* in Multan made of wood with the image dating back to the *Krita Yuga* (several lakh years old) as per belief. It must have been at least of the Mauryan era, circa 4th century BC. It is now destroyed. Sometimes the images are very large ones made of stucco with delicate plaster applied and the details of the figures brought out very carefully and coloured. The *Siva* and *Parvati* stucco figures behind the *Siva Linga* in *Vedaranyam* and *Tirumazhisai* are exquisite examples. The usual norm for these fixed images in the *cella* was stone. The moving images were made of metal.

Sculpture manifests the vision of the whole (*Poorna*) by personifying it. Indian art does not portray the specific. Each image is an embodiment of a dominant mood depicted in a given pose. It is a still picture of dynamic movement at a given moment in time. The cosmic infinite is depicted in the body of the particular form. The form is personal but the idea is impersonal. *Adi Sankara,* the great philosopher considered an *Avatar* (human manifestation) of Lord *Siva,* has beautifully explained it as embodying the infinite in a finite form with features symbolising the triumph of good over evil (*Suguna Brahma* symbolising *Nirguna Brahma*). That male and female are two sides of

the same coin is depicted by the androgyne form *Ardhanariswara*. This form for the first time in history showed the oneness of the male and the female. This is also due to *Advaita* philosophy that says that all matter and spirit are mere manifestations of one divine force. The secret of the atomic structure was known thousands of years ago to our seers. The three phases of creation, sustenance and destruction are embodied in the iconographic depiction of the *Linga*. The *Linga* consists at the bottom of the *Brahma* (creation) portion, above it in the middle of the *Vishnu* (sustenance) portion and the visible top or cylindrical portion is the *Siva* (destruction) form. The bottom portion has a lotus base (*Brahma*), on which is placed a rectangular or circular platform *yoni peetah* (*Vishnu*) into which the pillar on top (*Siva*) is inserted all in the same stone assembly. The earliest example of a *Linga* (Photo-Page No.13) that we have discovered so far is in *Gudimallam*, 3 Kilometres from *Renigunta* near *Tirupati* (Andhra Pradesh). The *Linga* form symbolises the eternal pillar of fire. It is interesting to note that in modern physics, the universe started as a pillar of fire according to one theory. God manifested himself as a pillar of fire to Moses according to the Old *Testament*. There seems to be some common memory of humanity recorded in this iconic form. The *Gudimallam Siva* belongs to circa 3rd - 2nd Century BC . The depiction of the *Yaksha* shows the expression of the strain of bearing the load of *Siva* on his shoulders par excellence. It has the same iconographic features as the Buddhist sculptures of *Amaravati* in the museum. The three aspects of creation, preservation and destruction are depicted as conjoined images of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Maheswara*. *Harihara* the combined form of *Siva and Vishnu* and *Lingas* (four faced and three faced) all depict the unity of the force that is responsible for creation. But the earliest depiction of *Siva* in physical form in *Gudimallam* is not that of a *Linga* only as is commonly believed, but as a personified *Siva* held above the head by a *Gana* (*Yaksha* if in Jainism and Buddhism). The *yoni peetah* is fenced in by the grill of stone in the same manner as in a *Buddhist Stupa*. From the style of the face of the *gana*, it may be taken as roughly the period of the *Amaravati Stupa*.

The *Siva* is *digambara* (the loin cloth is open in the front), but has a headgear of a wreath, which may be taken to signify a King or Chief. He holds an animal may be an antelope in one hand and a vessel of water (*Ghatam* in Sanskrit or *Sombu* in Tamil) in the other usually used by religious mendicants or saints (*Sadhus* or *Rishis*

i.e. *Bhiksatanamurti*). On his shoulder rests a bow. The animal and the bow in the sculpture is taken to signify a hunter. A little reflection will show that the *Ghatam* is out of place for a hunter. Therefore, the earliest discovered depiction also shows not only a *Linga*, but also a personification as a hunter of souls (God of Destruction) cum religious mendicant saint or *Rishi* *(Sadhu)* emerging out of the *Linga* or Pillar of Fire i.e. the emergence of matter and creation out of the Big Bang. Energy becomes matter. The *Digambara* pose shows non-attachment to the material world, i.e. he is above the material world. This is called a phallic symbol of sex by a few Western authors of the British Imperial era like Miss Mayo, who do not go deep into this but want to criticise the ancient culture of India. Of course, there are others who treat the ancient culture with deep respect. In this case, it is a symbol of creation. The symbol here signifies fertility at the mundane level and the creation or the triumph of matter over anti-matter at the metaphysical level.

Vaishnavism

Just as Buddhism and Jainism are protests over the excessive emphasis on *yagnas*, the *Vishishtadvaita* philosophy arose partly as a protest and partly as a modification of *Advaita* philosophy. At the mundane level, followers of *Advaita* who are most numerous, worship all the Gods especially the Trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* without distinction. Images of *Vishnu* are found in *Siva* temples in Tamilnadu and the present Karnataka and Andhra regions. In Kerala, even now *Advaita* is the only philosophy followed and therefore temples have the images of both *Siva* and *Vishnu*. *Sri Ramanujacharya* preached this philosophy in the period of the *Chola* King, *Kulottunga* II (1136-1150 AD). He stated that the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma* are different but the former could merge with the latter i.e. attain salvation by surrendering to the *Paramatma* and of course doing good deeds. Since the *Cholas* were staunch *Saivites*, his philosophy which translated at the mundane level to giving exclusive primacy to Lord *Vishnu* to the exclusion of Lord *Siva* was resisted. He fled to *Melkote* near Mysore in Karnataka. He converted the *Hoysala* King, *Vishnuvardhana* (1111 AD -1141 AD) to *Vaishnavism* by performing many miracles. He returned to *Srirangam*, where even now his preserved body is worshipped in a separate sanctum. *Madhvacharya* in Udipi (12th to 13th Century AD), South Kanara District, Karnataka preached *Dvaita* as a still further

modification of *Vishishtadvaita*. He stated that the *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma* are distinct. The *Jeevatma* could attain salvation but not merge in the *Paramatma*. These philosophies gave rise to temples exclusively dedicated to Lord *Vishnu* or his *avatars, Rama, Krishna* etc. The later *Pandya* Kings and *Vijayanagar* rulers gave prominence to *Vaishnavite* temples though they did not neglect *Saiva* temples. *Dvaitas* do not worship *Siva* at all. Most *Vaishnavaite* temples in Tamilnadu, parts of Andhra and Karnataka, which were under strong Tamil influence in the early days do not have images of *Siva*, due to the rivalry between *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism*. This is relevant for iconography and temple architecture scholars. For the past few decades such distinctions have ceased to be relevant and are not considered important by both sects as religion itself and Hinduism in particular face the challenges of the materialism of the West.

Sculptures were first made in stone. Then they were transformed into Bronzes as *Stapathis* (traditional Sculptors) mastered the art of metal casting. As seen above, they are permanent art frozen at a moment of time for posterity. They are shaped and formed as dynamic forms of life frozen at that moment in time. Each small unit of the human figure has a role to play. Eyes, nose, ears, face, torso and limbs and each physical gesture singly and in combination suggests an inner meaning. In its sum total, it suggests an impersonal emotion and evokes a feeling of oneness with the supernatural, the infinite or God the *Jeevatma* (the living being) merging with the *Paramatma* (the transcendental). This symbolises the abstract philosophy of *Advaita* (Absolute Monism) in concrete form. This gives a heightened internal experience not easily expressed in words.

Nataraja, the symbol of the macrocosm in the microcosm

The *Nataraja* image is an example of the highly advanced thinking that the sages (*Rishis* and *Siddhas*) of India symbolised.

Dance of *Siva*

Lord *Siva*'s dance represents His (*Siva's*) activities (*Panchakritya* - five fold activities) viz. *Shrishti* (overlooking creation, evolution) *Sthiti* (Preservation, Support), *Samhara* (Destruction, Evolution), *Tirobhava* (Veiling, embodiment, illusion and also giving

rest) and *Anugraha* (Release from cycle of births and deaths, Salvation, Grace). The 36th verse of the *Saivite* Sastra, *Unmai Vilakkam* tells: creation arises from the drum kept in the right upper hand; protection proceeds from the hand of hope (*abhaya mudra*); from fire proceeds destruction; the foot held aloft gives release.

The entire interpretation given in the Tamil *Saivite* works like *Unmai Vilakkam, Tiru - Arul - Payan, Tirumandiram* etc. for the *Naadanda* or *Ananda* dance of Lord *Siva*, have been summarised in the following passage by the great Indian Art historian, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. At the metaphysical level, the interpretation by Ananda Coomaraswamy in his 'Dance of *Siva*' states,

"The essential significance of *Siva's* Dance is threefold: First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the source of all movement within the Cosmos, which is represented by the Arch; Secondly, the purpose of his Dance is to release the countless souls of men from the Snare of Illusion; Thirdly, the Place of the Dance, *Chidambaram*, the centre of the Universe, is within the Heart" (Coomarasamy, Ananda, 1999, p.93).

In the language of physics, at the macro level, the universe is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. The stars and their planets are all moving, though they appear constant to the naked eye. This movement was realised by the sages who therefore portrayed God as dancing eternally. At the micro level, in the smallest particle known to physics, in the atom, the electrons and neutrons are dancing around the nucleus. This dance of all matter around a nucleus the sages somehow realised and depicted in the *Nataraja* form. This forms the dynamic pose at a moment in time for the benefit of humanity. It is interesting to note that contrary to common belief *Mayan*, considers *Nataraja* as the primal manifest form of the unmanifest. Time and Space, Energy and Matter are represented in this form. Energy and matter were realised as two sides of the same coin. "*OM*" the primeval sound of ancient Indian civilisation, the music heard when the atoms dance, the music of the spheres as Pythagoras calls it is symbolised in this form. The unity of space, time, matter and anti-matter is represented in this form.

The bronze images (*utsava* or festival deities) were intended to be taken out in procession perambulating within the temple for the benefit of the devotees assembled in

the temple to witness the festival. The old villages and towns conformed to the *Vaastu* (ancient Indian science of architecture in which the physical and spiritual blended) form. They were laid out around the temple as a square or rectangle. The icons go into the village, into every street by turn, stop almost at every doorstep to bless every individual devotee. These are known as the *Chalabhera* or the moving images. The fixed images were made in stone usually granite in South India and marble in North India. These images corresponded to the theory of how an image should look like. This theory is enunciated in *Silpasastras* written by masters in art and architecture like *Manasara, Mayan* etc. The earliest is dated by historians traditionally to the 3rd Century BC, though now the dates are being pushed back in the light of new evidence by a thousand years or even a few thousand years (refer Holistic dating by Kannan, Dr. R., 2000).

Bronzes

The moving images were usually made in bronze through *Cire Perdue* or Lost Wax method The earliest example of a bronze found so far is the circa 2nd century bronze of the *Buddha* from *Amaravati*. This is also in the museum. This method of casting has been well known to the people of South India for a long time. The mode of casting the metal images is termed as *Madhucchistavidhana* or the Lost Wax method. As the name suggests the molten metal is poured into the hollow of the mould. That south India is famous for her large collection of highly aesthetic bronzes is no exaggeration at all. After the ravages of time and invasions have taken their toll, the temples in South India are still full of images of the highest quality and many of them are still under worship. The bronzes are known for their chiselled sophistication, perfection of modelling and restrained artistic statement. They are unmatched examples of a mastery of the technique of the Lost Wax method. The art was really developed in the *Pallava* era {the bronze of *Siva* in the Sarabhai Museum and *Natesa, Kuram* (Sl.No. 69)} and reached its zenith in the *Chola* era in the famous *Nataraja* icons. The art continued in the *Vijayanagar* period and is alive even to this day. The artisans of *Swamimalai* near *Kumbakonam*, Thanjavur District make excellent bronzes even now.

Bronzes used to be buried underground during alien invasions to save then from being mutilated or stolen. Some of them had developed mutilations (*Bhinna*) on their

own. As per *Agama Sastras* (ancient proto- historic treatises governing the mode of worship and rituals in temples) these were buried like human beings. Behind this is the Hindu philosophy that once God has been symbolised in human form, he/she should be treated as a human being, highly exalted albeit. This is the reason for a daily ritual bath being given to the idols in temples, being given ritual food (*Naivedya*) etc. The ancient Indians were the most advanced people of their time. In the cycle of time, they may have later on fallen on evil days. It is wrong to judge ancient India by its present condition. Even now as compared to thirty years ago, a revival of our ancient temples and interest in our ancient arts and sciences is taking place. It is not so fashionable to decry all things Indian as it was. Indian rulers of the day have paved the way for the preservation of India's cultural wealth. Under the Indian Treasure-Trove Act of 1878, the museums used to receive all the bronzes buried in the ground. The Government Museum, Chennai and the District Museums were very big beneficiaries. Now-a days there is a tendency to keep these bronzes in the villages or towns in the temples near which they are recovered for worship. The worry is that like the famous *Sivapuram Nataraja* they should not end up in the illegal art market.

Modes of Casting

There are two methods of casting metal images - solid and hollow casting.

Solid Casting

The required image is fashioned by the *sthapati* in beeswax. Then the wax model is given several coats of fine clay. The clay mould is then carefully dried under the sun if it is mild or in the shade. After a few days the clay mould is ready for casting. When the wax model is prepared and is ready for the preparation of the clay mould, arrangements for the preparation of the alloy are made (Photos-Page No.13). The number of metals to be used in the alloy are five - copper, silver, gold, brass and lead popularly known as *panchaloha*. In actual practice by chemical testing we have found the percentages of the metals as follows:

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. Normally bronze is a composite alloy of metals-copper, tin, lead, silver and gold in

varying proportions. But analysis of South Indian bronzes reveal that they invariably consist of copper, tin, lead, zinc and iron. Trace elements such as arsenic, antimony, bismuth etc., have been detected. Above 1% is considered as a major element. Below 1% and above 0.1% is considered a minor element and below 0.1% is considered a trace element. e.g. Copper:79%; Tin: 5%; Lead: 13%; Zinc: 1%; Iron: 1%; Trace elements are arsenic, antimony, nickel and silver and no gold is present. This shows tin has been used. Therefore, the alloy is predominantly of brass, tin and lead. Presence of gold and silver is rare or trace. The clay mould with the wax model inside it is baked skilfully over an oven kept in the open ground. The mould is sufficiently heated to drain out all the wax. When the alloy is ready, it is poured through the orifice into the empty mould in a thin, even and continuous stream. The molten metal is allowed to cool. Then the mould is broken open and the solid metal image is obtained. The image is given finishing touches by the *sthapati*. This part, the opening of the eyes of the image is what imparts the exquisite expressions on the faces. This is done under some sort of spiritual inspiration. Sometimes, *Stapathis* are known to take even weeks to open the eyes. The science of image making is dealt with in the ancient Indian science of *Shilpasastra* (sculpture science) in his work, *Mayamatam* by *Mayan*. It is conjectured that this *Mayan* has links with the *Mayan* civilisation of South America (Kannan, Dr. R, 2001(1), p.82). This work gives the iconographic features and iconometric measures for sculptures. Bronzes are sculptures made of metal.

Hollow Casting

In this case the object is moulded in clay and the core is coated with wax, which in turn is covered with a coating of clay. After draining the wax by heating, the mould is used for casting. This method is usually associated with North India. The majority of the images displayed in this book are made by solid casting method, while, some representations of *grama devatas* (village deities) are hollow cast.

Investment Casting

The ancient Indian process of Lost Wax was revived in the 1980s as the only

method that gives the fine tolerances up to the third decimal place by the aeronautical and space industry of the United States of America. It has since then caught on. The turbines in the aircraft engines and internal parts of the rocket engines are made by this process, which is now called Investment Casting (Photo-Page No.13). In India, the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory does research into this process. Now, of course, high precision computer controlled machines are used. This shows that at a certain point in time Indian technology was far ahead of its time only to lag behind later.

Dating Of Bronzes

The five periods of Tamil Architecture and Sculpture – *Pallava*, Early *Chola*, Later *Chola*, *Vijayanagar* and Modern – have their own characteristic styles. The characteristics of each period developed gradually from that of the previous one in a continuum without any abrupt breaks in style.

Pallava Period (600 - 850 AD)

The figures are natural in posture and moulding. The face is rather oval with a flat nose and double chin. The front of the torso is almost flat. Draperies tend to be heavy. Emblems are as a rule held in the hands in a natural pose. They do not have the flames that surround them, a characteristic of *Chola* period iconography (later period). The *Kirita* (*Vishnu's* head dress) tends to be nearly cylindrical. The sacred thread is ribbon like with a special fastening over the left breast; it may extend across the right forearm.

Early Chola (850 - 1100 AD)

Figures are slightly more formal in posture and moulding than in the *Pallava* period. The face is rounder than before, roughly oval. As a rule the body is gracefully flexed.

Later Chola (1100 - 1350 AD)

Poses and draperies become more definitely conventionalised and the nose becomes more prominent. The torso is somewhat more strongly moulded in front.

The *Kirita* becomes conical. The sacred thread consists of three strands of equal thickness, so arranged as to produce a symmetrical effect.

Vijayanagar Period (1350 - 1600 AD)

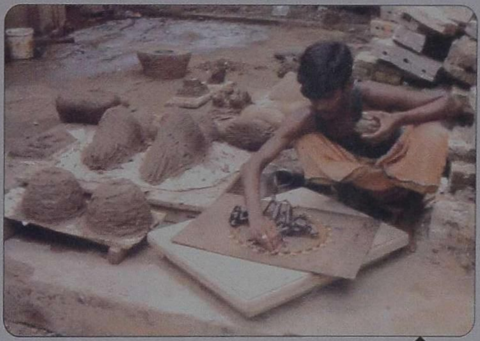
Figures tend to be formal with elaborately conventionalised draperies. The face is somewhat expressionless with prominent nose and chin. The stomach is rounder than before and tends to droop forwards. The navel is often emphasised by horizontal and vertical rays.

Modern Period (From 1600 AD)

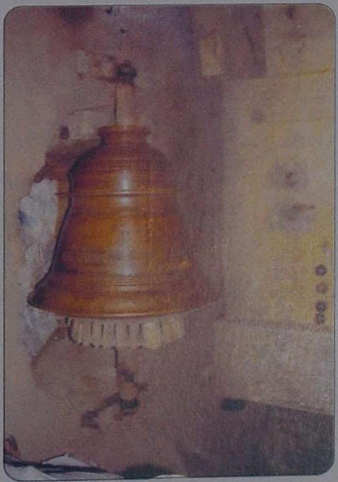
Figures are unusually stiff and lifeless with unduly prominent noses, stiff hands and conventionalised emblems and draperies. The mode of treatment of the face and the abdomen characteristic of the *Vijayanagar* period tends to be intensified. The intricacy of the features with *Trivali* (a fold in the stomach region) etc., can be seen. The ornamentation is also more intricate.

Gudimallam - Siva

Lost wax (Solid cast)



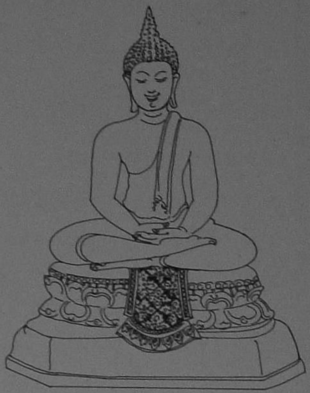
Traditional mould based solid cast



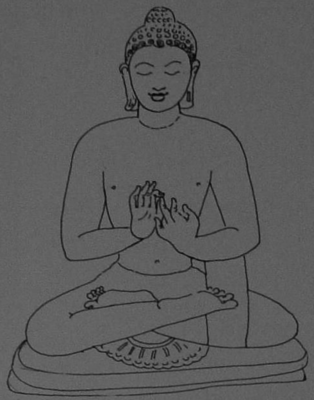
Casting of a Bell

Modern Investment Casting Components based on Lost Wax Technology

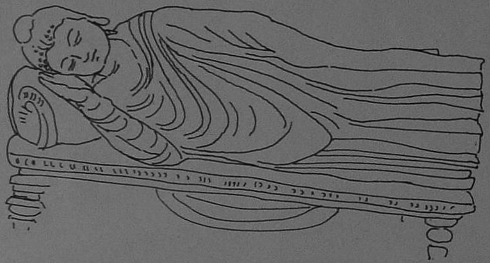
Buddha (line sketch) depicting different *Mudras*



Dhyana

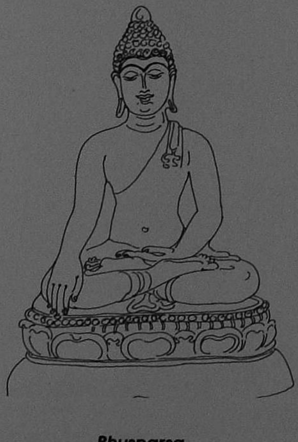


Dharma Chakra Pravarthana



Parinirvana

Vyakarna



Bhusparsa

TYPOLOGICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF IMAGES

BUDDHISM

The sixth century BC witnessed a religious renaissance on the basis of the doctrines of *Buddha* and *Mahavira*. These were reformatory movements that spun off from the parent Hindu religion. They were protests against what was perceived as excessive ritualism. They spread the gospel of liberation (*moksha*) based on reason and freedom from rituals.

Since *Buddhism* is a development of the *upanishadic* (commentaries on the *Vedas*) philosophy, "the *Buddhist* mythology which grew up about *Buddhism* drew upon the traditions of the land in which the doctrine was first taught." It considered *Buddha* as a historical figure. In the *Hinayana* form of *Buddhism*, which prevailed for a few centuries after the death of the *Buddha*, the new Protestant sect remained an agnostic doctrine. As time passed, after the 2nd Century AD, when Emperor *Kanishka* held his famous council, the *Mahayana* form or deifying of *Buddha* started. Still later on, *Buddha* came to be considered an incarnation of Lord *Vishnu* and was co-opted into the Hindu Pantheon of deities. This incarnation and reincarnation theory (*Jataka* tales) is the contribution of Indian soil to Buddhist metaphysical thought and philosophy.

The *Buddha* was considered too sacred to be represented in human form in *Hinayana Buddhism*. So he was represented by symbols in the early period. It was only after the advent of the *Mahayana Buddhism* that he came to be represented in human form.

According to the *Jataka* tales, *Buddha* had a number of previous births known as *Bodhisattva* (*Buddha* elect). These tales narrate the incidents to introduce the doctrine of reincarnation, with each incarnation being a training ground to earn *punya* (the nearest English equivalent is merit). This *punya* gives a higher form of life till the being reaches *Buddhahood*. These lives in various forms sometimes-human, sometimes-animal etc., resulted in the worship of minor deities and their female counterparts. This culminated in an immense pantheon of various forms of the *Buddha*, *Bodhisattvas*, *Tara* etc, whose images are frequently found in metal in South India.

The *Buddha* is represented as standing or seated. He has a single pair of

hands. The hands are shown in one of the five poses; *abhaya* (open palm pointed upwards in pose granting protection), *varada* (open palm pointed downwards in pose granting boons), *dhyana* (in meditative posture), *bhusparsa* (touching the earth) or *dharmachakra pravarthana* (the pose of turning the wheel of *Dharma* or righteousness) (Line sketches-Page no.14).

Maitreya

He is represented as standing generally. He generally has two pairs of hands. The upper ones carry a rosary garland and a bunch of five Champa flowers and the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *varada*. A figure of a *Stupa* is to be seen on the headdress.

JAINISM

The theology of *Jainism* believes in rebirth of the soul due to the *Karma* theory like *Hinduism* but does not say anything about the existence of God unlike *Hinduism*. This is due to its protestant character to *Hinduism*. It evolved more and more like *Hinduism* which in turn adopted some of the *Jain* principles like vegetarianism. Partaking of the character of *Hinduism* is shown in the use of the symbols of *Hinduism* like the *Chakra* (wheel), conch etc., usually associated with the God, *Vishnu*. But giving them different meanings also shows the Protestant nature of *Jainism*. Ultimately, after the 9th Century AD, even the sacred thread of *Hinduism* is found depicted on the icons. There are characteristics of *Mahayana Buddhism* in *Jain* mythology as could be seen in the reincarnation of the *Tirthankaras* and their adversaries, the evil forces through several births much like the reincarnations of the *Bodhisattva* before he became *Buddha*. Similarly after enlightenment for the *Jina* or realised soul, there is no rebirth. The division into two main sects *Svetambara* and *Digambara* also reflects a Buddhist type division viz. *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*. The theological basis of this division is explored in the book on Iconography of *Jain* images in the Government Museum, Chennai by Kannan Dr. R., et al. (2001). The iconography of the Jain images have to be studied in the context of this exchange of religious and philosophic thought among the three ancient religions of India, viz. *Hinduism* and its Protestant off-shoots *Jainism* and *Buddhism*.

Jainism centres on a series of twenty-four *Tirthankaras* among whom *Mahavira* was the last and the most popular. They are represented either standing or seated with a single pair of hands. A *Tirthankara* has to be identified on the basis of his

cognisance symbol (*lanchana*), which can be seen on the pedestal right in the middle.

Yakshi Ambika

Yakshi Ambika is one of the four most famous *Yakshis* of the Jain Pantheon. The origin of this *Yakshi* is shrouded in mystery but many legendary accounts are found in both *Digambara* and *Svetambara Puranas*. The *Digambara* version of the biography of *Yakshi Ambika* is narrated in the *Yakshi Katha* portion of a work called *Punyasrava-Katha*, a palm-leaf manuscript. U.P.Shah found the manuscript in the possession of the priest of the Jain temple in *Jina Kanchi*. According to the version of this *Punyasrava Katha*, *Yakshi Ambika* was the wife of *Somasarma*, a *Brahmin* (the priestly caste of *Hinduism*) of *Girinagara*. Her name was *Agnila*. She had two sons *Subhangara* and *Prabhangara*, aged seven and five years respectively. Once during a *Sraddha* (a ritual conducted on the anniversary of the death of ancestors) ceremony in her house, a Jain monk who had fasted for full one month turned up and asked *Ambika* to give him food to break his fast. Greatly delighted *Ambika* fed him with dishes prepared for the specially invited *Brahmins* for the ceremony. On knowing this, her husband became wild with rage and drove her out of the house. She left the house along with her two sons and a faithful maid servant to the forest. According to the legend narrated by the *Svetambara* work, *Ambika Devi Kalpa* composed by *Jinaprabha Suri* (Circa 14th Century AD), *Ambika* left her house in a helpless condition along with her two sons. As *Ambika* travelled towards the forest, strange miracles occurred. When her children cried out for food and water, a dried mango tree by the road side gave them fine ripe mangoes and a dry lake nearby was filled all at once with sweet water. *Ambika* and her children rested for a while under the mango tree. At her home also miracles occurred. This made her husband and mother-in-law realise their folly. Her husband rushed to the forest in order to bring her back to the house. On seeing her husband coming, *Ambika* misunderstood his intention and jumped into the nearby well with her children and died. She was reborn as the *Yakshi* devoted to *Neminatha Tirthankara*. Her husband too, filled with remorse, died soon after her death. He was reborn as a lion and became her *Vahana* (vehicle).

The iconography of *Yakshi Ambika* can be explained with the help of the legends described above. She is represented invariably in South Indian sculptures and bronzes with her two children and the faithful maid who followed her in the critical situation. She holds a bunch of mangoes, which saved her and her children from starvation.

Her story is illustrated in the wall paintings in the *Sangeetha Mandapa* (hall where music concerts are held) of *Vardhamana* Temple at *Thirupparuttikunram*. Her two sons flank the *Yakshi* on both sides. Behind her son on the right side stands the attendant maid with a garland in her hand.

There is a sculpture (bas-relief) of *Yakshi Ambika* in *Vallimalai* Jain cave (Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001, Sl.No.73A on page no. 118). This is in seated *Raja Leela* pose with two hands. Below on the pedestal are shown figures of her sons. Her husband has been depicted in the form of a lion. The same theme had been used in casting *Ambika* figures four centuries earlier to this *Vardhamana* temple painting at *Thirupparuttikunram*. Of the many bronze figure of *Yakshi Ambika*, two in the *Thirunarunkondrai Parsvanatha* temple are remarkable. They are described in the book *Thirunarunkondrai Varalaru* by Dr.A. Ekambaranathan (1998, p.44 from Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001). They are comparable to the Museum figure. He has illustrated one of these two bronzes. Like the Museum figure, this 11th Century AD bronze also is depicted in *Tribhanga* standing pose. She is with her maid on her left side. Her two children are shown on her right. As in the case of the Museum figure, one of her two children is missing in the temple ensemble also. The other 12th Century AD *Yakshi Ambika* bronze in the same temple has both the children on her right side in standing pose. An important difference noticeable between these two temple bronzes and the Museum bronze rests on the type of one particular ornament found on them. The temple bronzes have the sacred thread along with other ornaments. The Museum *Yakshi* wears *Channavira* instead of sacred thread. The sacred thread symbolises the power of the person who wears it to protect his/her devotees while the *Channavira* symbolises the prosperity of the wearer. This symbolises how orthodoxy ultimately embraces even a Protestant religion to Hinduism. Though the *Yakshi Ambika* story is an attempt to show that service to suffering humanity is more important than ritual purity as symbolised in the *Sraddha* (ritual performed on the death anniversary of a deceased ancestor) of orthodox Hinduism, orthodoxy overtakes and embraces the symbol of this protest viz. the *Yakshi* also. The adoption of the symbol of sacred thread used by the *Brahmins, Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas* (the three upper castes of Hinduism) by Jainism is a negation of the Protestant aspect and also shows how any new order in course of time acquires the trappings of power and exclusiveness. *'La plus ca change la plus cette meme'* – the more it appears to be a radical change, the more it becomes the same as the old order.

HINDUISM

BRAHMA

He is one of the three Gods of the Hindu Trinity and is considered the first in the order. The Trinity consists of *Brahma* responsible for Creation, *Vishnu* for Protection and *Siva* for Destruction. Later on he lost his importance and a mythological story is narrated as to how he and *Vishnu* tried to find out the head and feet of Lord *Siva* standing as the cosmic pillar of fire (the cosmic *Linga*) and that *Brahma* told a lie that he had seen the top. Therefore, his worship ceased in temples and it is only rarely that he is worshipped as in *Kodumudi* (Erode district), which is a temple dedicated to all the three of the Hindu trinity. The Vaishnavites portray *Brahma* as having emerged from the navel of Lord *Vishnu*. He is shown on a lotus with two leaves with its stalk emerging from the navel of Lord *Vishnu*. Philosophically, he is said to be still in *Rajo guna* (the middle state of mind as against Lord *Vishnu* and Lord *Siva* who are in *Satva guna*). The three states of mind are *Tamo guna* (base instincts, thought and action), *Rajo guna* (a higher state of mind but still the ego persists - both good and bad are present) and *Satva guna* (the highest state of mind, where noble thoughts and good alone exists).

Brahma is portrayed iconographically with four heads, the fifth having been plucked away by Lord *Siva*. The four faces are united at the ears. The four heads have four *kirita makutas* combined into one, the difference being shown as bas-relief. He is usually seated on a lotus. His mount (*Vahana*) is the swan (mythical *Hamsa*, a bird which can separate milk from a mixture of milk and water i.e. knowledge(grain) from a mixture of grain and chaff). He usually has four hands, the upper hands carrying a rosary garland and *kamandala*, the lower hands are held in *abhaya mudra* and *varada mudra*. He is seated in *veerasana*.

SAIVITE IMAGES

Siva is the third member of the Hindu Trinity. He has the largest number of followers. *Saivites* except a very few also worship *Vishnu*. The word '*Siva*' meaning 'the auspicious' occurs as an epithet of *Rudra* in the early Vedic literature. *Rudra* is praised in all Vedic hymns. He occupies a supreme position among the deities and

is described as the destroyer. Various accounts of the birth of *Rudra-Siva* are given in the *Puranas*. He has many names besides *Rudra* and *Siva*, such as *Maheswara*, *Tripurantaka*, *Trinetra* and *Neelakanta*.

He is worshipped in the form of *Linga* or the primordial pillar of fire as seen in the introductory chapter. The *Linga* is generally fixed on a circular or quadrangular receptacle on a pedestal known as *yoni* or *parivattom* or *avudaiyar* (Tamil), the surface of which is fashioned in such a way so as to draw off the water poured over the God during the ritual bath. It is a common adage that *Siva* is as fond of bathing as *Vishnu* of decoration.

Images of *Siva* are also worshipped. He is represented as seated, standing and dancing. He carries an axe (*parasu*) and an antelope (*mruga*) in his upper hands while the lower ones are in the *abhaya* and *varada* postures. In the North, the *trisul* (trident) is often seen. Other emblems that are generally attributed to *Siva* are, kettledrum (*udukkai*), skull-cup and various weapons of war. His matted hair is made up in the form of a headdress called *Jata makuta*, showing the crescent moon, skull, snake and flowers. He has three eyes (hence known as *Trinetra*), the third one being situated on the forehead. The third eye is never opened. If he opens it, it will burn every thing by its sight. This seems to represent some kind of a fusion cum laser beam weapon, which we have not discovered or invented yet. He is usually represented with ear ornaments inserted in the lobe of the ears. He is adorned like *Vishnu* with the usual ornaments, viz, necklace, girdle, armlets, anklets etc.

Siva has two main forms, one benign and the other terrifying. Each form has many aspects, some of which are assumed for a particular purpose. In a majority of cases the purpose is as in the case of *Vishnu*, to punish the wicked and protect the weak, and bless the devotees.

Representations of *Siva*, as standing or seated, either alone or with his consort, as a teacher of music and as a philosopher (*Dakshinamurti*); as a bestower of boons (*Anugrahamurti*); and as a master of dance (*Nrittamurti*) are known as pacific forms while the representations in terrifying form are known as *Samharamurtis*.

Adhikara Nandi

When *Nandi* is standing (usually at the entrance of a *Siva* temple) in *therianthropomorphic* form, he is called *Adhikara Nandi.* He holds a stick resting on his right shoulder. His hands are in *anjali mudra.* His upper hands hold the emblems seen in *Siva's* images (see also *Nandi*).

Aiyanar

Aiyanar (The Lord) is one of the most popular village deities (*Gramadevata*) of South India. He is linked with the mainstream Hindu Pantheon as the Son of *Siva.* Simple shrines dedicated to *Aiyanar* are established on the south side of rural villages, usually in association with a grove of trees and a pond. *Aiyanar's* shrines usually feature a stone image of the god and large group of terracotta horses standing in the open air. At least two horses must be offered to *Aiyanar* each year, so that he can patrol the village every night with his attendant, *Karuppan* (the dark one). *Aiyanar* is worshipped with offerings of rice, fruit and flowers, but during certain festivals blood sacrifices are carried out for *Karuppan* within *Aiyanar's* shrines.

Appar

Appar (*Tirunavukkarasar*) lived during the first half of the 7th century. He was born a *Saivite,* but after the untimely death of his parents and of the man to whom his sister was betrothed, he embraced *Jainism.* His sister, however, remained a *Saivite.* He gained recognition as a Jain scholar and became the head of a monastery. Once *Appar* suffered a painful stomach ailment, which did not respond to the treatment of the Jain doctors. His sister prayed to *Siva* and gave *Appar* a pinch of the sacred ash. He was immediately cured and became an ardent devotee of *Siva.* The *Jains* subjected him to several ordeals but he emerged unscathed.

Appar lived to be eighty-one. He converted kings; brought the dead back to life and composed poems that contain the essence of *Saivite* philosophy. Unaffected by fame, he performed such menial services as cleaning the courtyards of temples that he visited. He always carried a small spade for that purpose. In order to test his dedication, *Siva* sprinkled precious stones among the weeds and sent celestial damsels to dance in his

path. *Appar's* devotional poems made those illusions vanish as quickly as they appeared. *Appar's* humility and dedication impressed *Saivites* so much that they identified him by the spade that he carried.

Ardhanariswara

According to *Saivite* mythology, Sage *Bhringi*, whose devotion to *Siva* was exclusive once found *Parvati* sitting very close to *Siva*. The sage could not ask her to move, yet he wanted his worship to be directed to *Siva* alone. Quickly he assumed the form of a bee, circumambulated *Siva* and flew away quickly. *Parvati*, offended by this act wished to attain an even closer union with *Siva* and performed severe acts of penance to achieve that union. After a period of trial, *Siva* much impressed with her devotion and penance acceded to her wish by assuming the *Ardhanariswara* form.

The *Ardhanariswara* form is a literal composite of *Siva* and *Parvati* - in the right and left halves respectively - rendered in standing posture. Philosophically it is a union. *Siva*, the godhead and *Sakti*, the divine energy, are the creative forces, which cannot function without each other. It can be philosophically seen as the portrayal of matter and energy needing each other to function or that from energy comes matter i.e. this universe. It also shows that male and female are two aspects of every life split to ensure propagation.

As specified in the *silpasastras*, *Siva* wears the *Jata makuta* and *Parvati* the *karanda makuta*. *Parvati's* narrow forehead, long, fish shaped eye, thin lips and rounded cheek contrast with the masculine form of *Siva*. Even the shape of the nose on either side is different. Though largely a matter of size, a contrast is seen also in the jewels around the neck.

Bhairava

Bhairava is one of the *ugra* (angry) forms of *Siva*. According to the *Sivapurana*, from every drop of blood that *Siva* shed in his fight with *Brahma*, there arose *Bhairavas* (a manifestation of a part of the power of *Siva*), each equipped with a deadly weapon. The army of *Bhairavas* fought along with *Siva* and subdued *Brahma*. Though very much a feared form, his presence is indispensable in any large *Siva* temple. Along with a hungry dog, his mount, he guards the temple properties.

Anyone stealing temple properties incurs the wrath of *Bhairava*. This is to make sure that people do not misbehave by literally putting the fear of God in them.

The *silpasastras* (treatises regulating the shapes of sculptures) mention sixty-four forms of *Bhairavas*, though only three of them, the *Vatuka*, *Kaala* and *Svarnakarshana Bhairavas* are commonly represented.

Despite the menacing attributes and its grim facial expression, the image has a graceful charm as well, revealed in the subtle contours of its delicately profiled limbs.

Chandikeswara

The original name of *Chandikeswara* was *Visarasarman*. When young, on seeing a cowherd mercilessly beating a cow, though he had no experience, he volunteered to graze the cows. This was despite being a Brahmin by caste, whose work is normally only to chant *mantras* (ritual chants to Gods) and pray. Every day after grazing the cows, he would lead them to a river and as they quenched their thirst he would play, making a *Linga* in the sand. Due to his care, the cows started giving more milk, some even voluntarily letting out the milk in the fields. *Visarasarman* started collecting this milk to pour it on the *Linga* in a ritual bath (*Abhisheka*). Word of his playing in the riverbed and pouring the milk in the sand reached the village. His father, in order to investigate the truth of this allegation, followed *Visarasarman*, hid himself behind a tree and waited. As usual the youngster returned in the evening leading the herd. He made a *Linga* and proceeded to sprinkle it with milk. The irate father walked towards *Visarasarman*, expecting an explanation. Immersed in worship, *Visarasarman* was oblivious of the presence of his father. Incensed at what he thought was arrogance, the father kicked the pot of milk. Without even looking up, *Visarasarman* angrily hurled a stick that lay nearby at the legs that committed the sacrilegious deed. Thrown to protect the offerings to *Siva*, the stick transformed itself into an axe and cut off the father's leg. The agonising cries of his father did not distract the young devotee from his devotions. Pleased with such display of earnest devotion, *Siva* appeared, blessed them and after restoring the father's legs, gave *Visarasarman* a new name, *Chandesa*, Lord of Passion and made him the chief of his *Ganas*, attendants. Picking up the flower garland from his own head, *Siva* wrapped it around *Chandesa's* head and decreed that from that day onwards a part of all the offerings made to him must be set aside for *Chandesa*.

Chandesa's presence is thus mandatory in *Siva* temples. The proper circumambulation of a devotee starts with obeisance to *Ganesa*, then worshipping *Siva* and he must end the perambulation seeking the blessings of *Chandesa*. His story carved prominently on the wall of the *Rajarajeswaram* Temple at *Gangaikondacholapuram* would indicate the popularity of his cult during the *Chola* period.

Chandesa is portrayed usually sitting in a relaxed manner, his right leg hanging down and the left folded and resting comfortably on the pedestal. *Nayanmars* are usually represented holding in their hands the object associated with their pious deed and though *Chandesa's* extended right hand does not hold anything now, by its gesture and mythology, we can surmise that it must have held an axe. Some of his representations in stone and metal show him carrying an axe.

Usually, his matted hair is piled up like a *Jata makuta*. The garland that *Siva* gave him is clearly visible above his forehead. A flower is also stuck on the top of his head. Short hair that cannot be tied in his *Jata makuta* falls in curls on his back.

His facial features with eyes closed as though he is in meditation and a trace of a smile on his lips, make the visage serene. His smooth chin gradually recedes towards his neck. *Patra kundalas* adorn his ears.

A simple ring like necklace rests on his chest. The necklace and its dark shadow etch a line that seems to mark the head and neck as a distinct area. On his broad, flat chest a *yagnopavita* rests. It runs parallel to the necklace, falls directly on the *Udarabandha* and then goes back over the right hip. In the triangle formed by the raised points of his nipples and the navel, we can see the trace of the head of a charging bull, the norm the *sthapatis* follow in fashioning the chest of a man.

Chandrasekhara

The name Chandrasekhara means 'wearer of the moon'. The inclusion of the crescent moon (waxing phase) on the headdress of *Siva* is a usual feature of any *Siva* image. The *Siva* image in a *samabhanga* pose with the hands in the postures of *abhaya* and *varada* has been specially called *Chandrasekharamurti*. The upper hands hold the usual symbols, the axe and antelope. *Siva* in this form is popular. Such images are to be found in all *Siva* temples.

The portrayal also known as *Kevalachandrasekhara* (*Chandrasekhara* alone) has him represented as standing erect (*samabangha* posture). He has two pairs of hands. The upper ones hold the usual emblems and the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *varada.* The crescent moon is conspicuous in his *Jata makuta.* Representations of this form are seen in metal images.

The waxing moon has been an object of great fascination from primitive times. Accordingly great importance has been attached to this moon, associated with the primary god *Siva* and given an honoured place on the *Jata makuta* (Matted hair on the head tied in the shape of a conical crown) of *Siva.* Early Tamil literature and later *bhakti* (devotional) hymns of *Thevaram* and *Tiruvachagam* (Tamil devotional hymns) often contain references to the rising moon on *Siva's Jata makuta.* The legend behind the depiction of the moon on *Siva's Jata makuta* is that the moon god who got into trouble with other Gods was persecuted by them after the "Churning of the ocean of milk." Helpless, the moon god got asylum in the person of *Siva,* who as a gesture of kindness wore him prominently on his *Jata makuta.* All the Gods had therefore to bow before him in view of his vantage position on the *Jata makuta* of *Siva.* Wearing of the moon is therefore symbolic of protection and giving of asylum to the persecuted and downtrodden by the grace of God.

The existence of the moon, the snake and the *Ganga* together on the *Jata makuta* of *Siva* has been the subject of poetic imagination of devotees like *Manikkavachakar* and others as emphasising *Siva's* grace in reconciling the above antagonistic elements.

கதியடி யேற்குள் கழலதந்தரளவும் ஊண்கழியா
விதியடி யேனை விடுதிகண்டாய் வெண்தலை முழையிற்
பதியடி வாளரப் பார்த்திறை பைத்துச் சுரங்க அஞ்சி
மதிநெடு நீரிற்குளித் தொளிக்குஞ்சடை மன்னவனே!

-மாணிக்கவாசகர்

Durga

She is represented with four hands, the upper ones carrying the emblems of *Vishnu* and the lower ones being in the *abhaya* and *Kataka* poses. She wears a *karanda makuta* on the head and a *kucha bandha.*

Ganesa

Ganesa, the elephant faced God is otherwise known as *Ganapati, Vigneswara* and more popularly as *Pillaiyar* in Tamilnadu. He is the first of the two sons of *Siva* and *Parvati*, the other being *Subrahmanya*. *Ganesa* is the remover of all obstacles in ordinary life and the embodiment of wisdom and strength. At the commencement of any undertaking the Hindu of any sect offers prayers to this deity to bless him with success. The conception and delineation of the majestic form of *Ganesa* is the symbolic representation of the primordial sound "*Om*", the beginning of the universe, energy, power and joy all combined in one. Thirty-two forms of *Ganesa* are known to exist. He can have as many as eleven arms (including the trunk). One main variation is the *Valamsuli Vinayaka* (Tamil- also *Valampuri Ganesa*) with the trunk turned right instead of the usual left.

There is no pointed reference to the elephant faced deity of *Ganapati* among the *Vedic* Gods. However one version of a legend is that *Ganesa* wrote the great epic of *Mahabharata* with his broken tusk to the dictation of *Vyasa* its author. The broken right tusk is found in all the images of *Ganesa*.

The beginnings of *Ganapati* worship in this part of the country are to be found in prehistory. The origin can certainly be traced up to the *Sangam* age, i. e. First *Sangam*. Historically, we can see it at least from circa 1000 BC. The concept became more popular with the conquest of the Western *Chalukyas* by the *Pallavas* during the 7th Century AD. *Siruthonda Nayanar* one of the sixty three saint-devotees of *Siva* and the commander of the *Pallava* army seized an image of *Ganapati* from *Vatapi* as a token of his victory and installed it in the *Ganapatipuram* temple, *Tiruchenkattangudi* village, undivided Thanjavur District in Tamilnadu. In the temples built by the early *Cholas*, *Ganesa* was only a *parivara devata* or tutelary deity and no separate sanctum was built for him. Whatever may be the view of historians and scholars regarding the antiquity of worship of the God in Tamilnadu, the fact remains that *Ganesa* worship was in vogue from early times and that he had become the most adored and familiar deity in the South even before the *Pallava* period. He is with us for more than two thousand years. One can therefore find his image worshipped in the nooks and corners of India. A village in Tamilnadu may not possess a temple built for any God,

but certainly an image of *Ganesa* can be found under the green wood tree. He is a God of the humble masses.

Ganesa is also the lord of the *Ganas* that keep *Siva* company while he is dancing. *Rishi Tandu*, who has codified *Siva's* *Tandava Karanas* by careful observation, puts *Ganesa* as one who belongs to the dancing group of *Ganas*. But *Ganapati* was an actual performer and a participant of the *sandhya* (evening) dance of *Siva*. *Nritta Ganapati* or the dancing image of *Ganesa* is a very rare pose as compared to other Gods in the Hindu pantheon. This pose is to make devotion pleasant and refreshing.

Gangadhara

He is represented as standing, holding a trident obliquely across his back. He is shown supporting the river *Ganga* (Ganges), symbolised as a Goddess in her descent to the earth. When accompanied by *Parvati*, he is shown as embracing her with his lower left arm, consoling and assuring her that his affection would not be transferred to the river Goddess. His lower right arm is either held in the *abhaya* pose or placed near the chin of *Parvati*. His upper right arm holds up a lock of his matted hair (*jata*) on which is seen the river Goddess, *Ganga*. Sometimes the right arm may hold the axe and touch the lock of matted hair. *Parvati* stands to his left in a state of mental uneasiness, due to jealousy on finding her Lord supporting on his matted hair, a woman, viz., *Ganga*. *Parvati's* right hand hangs down freely while her left holds a flower or is in the *Kataka* posture.

When *Gangadhara* is shown without *Parvati*, his lower right hand either rests on the sacred bull (*Rishaba*, his *vahana* or mount) against which he leans, or is held in the *abhaya* or *varada* pose, while his left rests on the waist or in the *varada* pose.

This aspect illustrates the story of the descent of *Ganga* for the sake of *Bhagiratha*. *Siva* agreed to receive *Ganga* on his matted locks so as to prevent the force of the fall of *Ganga*, from causing heavy damage to earth. He received her on his right matted locks and hence became known as *Gangadhara*. When she came down with great force, *Siva* wanted to humble her and made her stay for sometime in his hair. When requested by *Bhagiratha*, he released her and he is known as *Gangavisarjanamurti*.

This theme is popular in stone sculptures, where *Bhagiratha* and others are also represented along with *Siva* and *Parvati*. It is seen in *Mahabalipuram* and *Tirugokarnam* (Pudukottai District and also sculptured as a bas-relief in the panel in the Rock Art and Cave Art Gallery, Government Museum, Chennai . Please refer to the Monograph on Rock Art and Cave Art by Dr. Kannan(2003). But in metal, only *Siva* and *Parvati* are represented. Sometimes *Siva* alone is shown. He carries the trident in his upper hands while the lower ones are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses.

Kali

Kali is the feminine counterpart of the angry forms of *Siva*. She has several manifestations, the most frequently rendered being the *Durga, Mahishasuramardini, Bhairavi* and *Chamundi*. In the *silpasastras*, literature and popular expressions of art, she is portrayed as fierce, gruesome and blood thirsty. Yet because her malevolence is directed against the wicked, she is feared by the evil and revered by the good.

The vivid descriptions of her appearance and the rituals connected with her worship in the *Silappatikaram*, a 2nd Century AD Tamil epic, indicate that by the third Century AD, her cult had reached a fairly evolved state in Tamilnadu. In the peasant, matrilineal societies of South India she is considered to be even more powerful than *Siva*. She is popular among the rural folk who propitiate her with spirits and ceremonies. Until recently her worship used to include animal sacrifice and libations of toddy.

Kalyanasundara

A group of sages approached *Siva*, the source of all knowledge, with a request to remove some of their doubts. After imparting true knowledge and removing all their confusion, *Siva* demonstrated the state of *Samadhi* (Trance). As he entered into a state of deep trance, controlling all his senses, the sense perceptions of all the creatures of the universe also ceased and all the activity and regeneration of life stopped. The rest of the Gods, disturbed at this development, sent *Brahma* and *Vishnu* to *Siva* with a request to end his *Samadhi*, marry *Parvati* and revive life. *Siva* acceded to their request and married *Parvati*. He stands as *Kalyanasundara*, the handsome bridegroom. *Vishnu* is the brother of *Parvati*, who gives her away in

marriage. This portrayal is famous in Madurai. It is considered to have been popularised by King *Tirumalai Nayak* in the 16th-17th Century AD to unify *Saivites* and *Vaishnavites* around the *Nayak* throne. He even built in a role for the Muslims in the annual *Chithrai* festival in the month of April, when the divine marriage is re-enacted every year to get their loyalty also.

Siva is represented as a bridegroom, standing and holding the right hand of *Parvati*. Sometimes, his lower right hand is shown stretching to receive the right hand of *Parvati*. *Parvati* stands either to his left or to his right with her head slightly bent down shyly. Her left hand either holds a flower or hangs loose. In some compositions, *Vishnu*, who gives *Parvati* in marriage, is seen standing and pouring water over the right hands of *Siva* and *Parvati*, from a spouted vessel (*Kendi* in Tamil, *kamandalu* in Sanskrit), which is held in his lower right hand. *Vishnu's* upper hands hold the usual emblems, while the lower left hand is in the *katyavalambita* (keeping the hand on the hip) pose.

Representations of this depiction of *Siva* are found in metal with *Siva* and *Parvati* constituting the group. The occurrence of this portrayal along with *Vishnu* and *Sridevi* is rare.

Kannappa Nayanar

According to the *Periyapuranam*, the great *Saivite* hagiography compiled by the Tamil poet *Sekkilar* during the 12th Century, *Tinnan* was a hunter who lived in *Pottappinadu*, the region around Nellore in the present day Andhra Pradesh. It is identified with the present Sri Kalahasti, a pilgrim town. In one of his hunting expeditions, *Tinnan* found a *Linga* in the jungle and started worshipping it regularly. Unfamiliar with the canonical modes of worship, his offerings to the *Linga* were roasted flesh, tasted by himself to make sure it was succulent. As he had to carry the meat in one hand and his bow in the other, he filled his mouth with water for the sacred bath and carried flowers for *puja* (worship) by sticking them in his own hair. Yet, as they were offered with genuine devotion, *Siva* gladly accepted them.

As he always does with his devotees, *Siva* decided to test the extent of *Tinnan's* devotion. One day as *Tinnan* went to worship the *Linga*, he saw blood dripping from

its right eye. Evidently he had been worshipping a *mukhalinga*, for only on such *Linga*ms is a face vividly carved. Though not a stranger to the sight of blood and wounds, *Tinnan* was shocked at this. Immediately, he tried to cure it with medicinal herbs. However, after trying all the cures known to him and despite his devoted care, the bleeding persisted. Finally, he stood in front of the *Linga*, very worried and wondering what to do next, *Tinnan* remembered a familiar proverb: " The cure for weakness of flesh is flesh". And then, immediately drawing an arrow from his quiver, he scooped out his own right eye with its sharp tip. He placed his own eye on the bleeding eye of the *Linga*. To his great joy, he saw that the bleeding had stopped. However, blood began to trickle from the other eye of the *Linga*. Now that he knew the remedy, *Tinnan* quickly proceeded to gouge out his remaining eye. Seeking no further proof of *Tinnan's* devotion, *Siva* then blessed him and restored his eyes. From that day onwards *Tinnan* gained a new identity, being called by the new name *Kannappa* meaning "the devotee who gave his eye".

Kankalamurti

This aspect of *Siva* is closely allied to *Bhiksatanamurti* (sage cum mendicant) and almost similar in appearance. He is represented standing with two pairs of hands, the lower left holding a kettledrum, which is beaten by a stick held in the corresponding right hand. The upper right arm holds the *kankaladamaru* or the staff on which the bones are tied up and ornamented with peacock feathers. A number of snake ornaments are distributed all over the body. He wears sandals on feet and he is draped.

To expiate the sin of having severed one of the heads of *Brahma*, *Siva* went to *Vishnu* to get his sin wiped out. But at the gate, *Vishvaksena*, the gatekeeper stopped him. During the fight that ensued between them, *Vishvaksena* was killed and his body was fixed in the trident with which he met *Vishnu*. *Vishnu* advised him to go to *Varanasi*, where his sin would be washed away.

A number of examples of this representation are available in stone and a few in metal.

Maheswari

This is a form of *Parvati* representing the features of her spouse *Maheswara*. Usually she has four hands. In the upper hands she carries the deer and *damaru*. Her lower hands are in *abhaya mudra* and carrying the skull cup. The third eye, the symbol of *Maheswara* is also portrayed.

Mahishasuramardini

She is a manifestation of *Durga* with more than two pairs of hands. She is represented as killing the buffalo headed demon king *Mahishasura*, who is seen lying at the feet of the *Devi*. Various weapons of war are held in her hands.

Manikkavachakar

He is the author of the famous Tamil *Tiruvachakam* hymns. His right hand is in the *upadesa mudra* (pose of imparting learning), while his left holds a palm leaf manuscript. He is a great *Saivite* saint. He started life as the Minister of the *Pandya* King, *Arimartana Pandyan* (*vadavooraar*). He misspent the money given to him to buy horses in building a *Siva* temple at Avudayarkoil, Pudukottai District, when he had a *Darshan* (vision) of Lord *Siva* there. When he returned to Madurai, the King imprisoned him for his misappropriation of the royal money. The good lord intervened by converting foxes into horses, which the King accepted only to find that they turned back into foxes the next day. Then, the King had a vision of Lord *Siva*, who made him realise his mistake. The King apologised to *Manikkavachakar*. But the saint had no desire to return to worldly life. He is one of the four great Saivite saints, who re-established *Saivism* in Tamilnadu.

Nandi

It is obligatory for every *Siva* temple to install a *Nandi* (sacred bull of *Siva*) image in the reclining form of a bull in front of *Siva*. Even in respect of other Gods, viz. *Ganesa*, *Subrahmanya*, and *Parvati* etc who have separate vehicles, *Nandi* is installed occasionally as a substitute. Because of his association with spiritual wisdom he is given the honourable title of *Iswara* and called *Nandikeswara*. In early Tamil literature, the word *Nandi* is synonymous with *Siva*. The form of *Nandi* is usually in a reclining position. When standing, he is called *Adhikara Nandi*.

Evolution of religion began with two main aspects, hero worship on the one hand and worship of nature and its symbols on the other side. The hero worshippers have regarded the bull, which is the earliest animal to be tamed, and domesticated, with great respect and adopted it as an outward symbol of an unseen intimate relationship with *Siva*. This motif, the Bull, has thus survived the ages to become the sacred vehicle of *Siva* besides being the foremost devotee of *Siva*. It is a significant fact that the bull has also figured prominently in the *Mohen-jo-daro* seals where it may be considered as a link between the dim past and the present day *Saivism*. The worship of *Baal*, the bull derided in the Bible might have been linked to this cult. This is because *Manetho*, who taught the Egyptians their astronomy is considered as *Manitha*, an Indian Hindu sage (Kannan, Dr. R., 2000, p.35).

Nataraja and Natesa

Among the aspects of *Siva*, the dancing form of *anandatandava* is the most popular in South India and the usual features are: the right leg of the God is placed on the back of a demon called *muyalakan* (Tamil) or *apasmara* (Sanskrit - personification of ignorance) and the left is raised. The upper right hand holds a kettledrum or *udukkai* (Tamil) and the upper left hand carries a fire pot, with tongues of flame leaping out. The lower right hand is held in the *abhaya* pose, the wrist being encircled by a serpent while the lower left hand is bent across to the right side in the position known as *gajahasta* or the elephant trunk pose, its fingers pointing below towards the left leg, which is raised in a dancing position. An ornament fashioned like peacock's feathers and exhibiting a head encircled by a snake adorns the head. *Ganga* and the crescent moon are seen on the locks. The ecstatic and violent movement of the dance described as the *anandatandava* in the quick whirling around on one leg is indicated by the matted hair stretching out on both sides of the head in wavy lines and by the cloth tied around the waist also flying in the air. *Bhringipada*, a jewel, peculiar to nataraja alone, is occasionally depicted.

There are many and varied legends explaining the origin of the dance of *Siva*. But the most popular is that *Siva* danced to quell the pride of *Kali*.

Bharata's Natyasastra, the authoritative treatise on Hindu Drama and Dance written by *Bharata*, a *Rishi*, speaks of 108 kinds of dances of *Siva*. The *Saiva Agamas*

(texts of rituals governing temple worship in *Saivite* temples) mention that *Siva* performed 108 poses of dances. Perhaps the 108 dance poses referred to in *Bharata's Natyasastra* are identical with 108 poses mentioned in the *Saiva Agamas*. Further it is said that *Siva* in different places and on different occasions performed 108 varieties of dance. Most of the poses of dance (*karanas*) are depicted in *Brihadeeswara* temple at *Thanjavur* and in the *gopuras* (temple towers) of the *Nataraja* temple at *Chidambaram*.

As stated earlier the *Anandatandava Nataraja* is popular in South India. *Chatura* (square *mudra*) and *Lalita* (bent square *mudra*) two of the 108 dance poses are rarely met with in South India. Both the words *Natesa* and *Nataraja* are almost synonymous. When his dance is viewed as a cosmic one, he is known as *Natesa*, meaning "Lord of Dances" and when it is viewed as a classical one, he is known as *Nataraja* meaning "King of Dances".

Parvati when associated with *Natesa* images is called *Sivakamasundari*.

A large number of representations of *Natarajas* and *Natesas* are available in stone and metal.

Parvati

Parvati or *Uma* or *Gauri* as she is otherwise called is portrayed with *Siva* as his only consort. She is represented when she is with him (*Siva*) as standing or sitting to his left with two hands, the right one holding a blue lily and the left one hanging down freely, (*lola*). Her head is decorated with a *karanda makuta* (the crown is in the form of a cone with the base at an angle of 30° pointed towards the apex; this shape is supposed to resemble the neck of a peacock), a headdress looking like a number of inverted pots arranged one over the other and sometimes with a royal headdress called *kesabandha* (hair done as a bun). When represented alone, she is always depicted seated and with two pairs of hands. The upper ones hold an axe and a noose (*pasa*), while the lower ones are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. *Siva's* vehicle is the bull and that of *Parvati* is the lion.

Besides worshipping *Vishnu* or *Siva* as the case may be, some people called *Saktas* consider the female, whom they called *Devi*, as the supreme deity. Since *Sakti*

cult is more akin to *Siva* cult and since the *Saktas* identify her with the consort of *Siva* the forms of *Devi* are dealt with under *Siva*. *Devi* has three main forms: *Durga*, the fighter, *Kali*, the terrifying destroyer and *Mahalakshmi*, the benign bestower of prosperity.

Pradoshamurti

In this version, *Chandrasekhara* is represented as leaning towards *Parvati*. The upper hands hold the usual symbols, the axe and antelope. The lower left hand embraces his consort and the lower right is in *abhaya*. *Parvati* holds a flower in her right hand while the left hangs down. In some representations, *Parvati* is shown as embracing *Siva* around his waist.

This representation is very popular in metal and can be seen in almost all temples. The name *Pradoshamurti* is given to this depiction, because such images are taken in procession within the temple premises on *pradosha* days i.e. two days before the full moon.

This representation is also known as *alinganachandrasekhara* (embracing *Chandrasekhara*).

Somaskanda

In this portrayal, *Siva* is seated with *Uma* on his left and their son *Subrahmanya* (*Skanda*) in between them on the same pedestal. The upper hands of *Siva* hold the usual symbols, while the lower right hand is in *abhaya* and the lower left hand either in *varada* or *simha karna* (*mudra* depicting the ear of the lion). *Uma*'s right hand is in *Kataka* and the left one rests on the seat or is held in *varada*. *Skanda* is represented as a child standing, sitting or dancing between his parents and holding a lotus flower in both hands. Sometimes the right hand holds a lotus flower and the left hand hangs loose. In some cases, the left hand holds a fruit and the right is in *suchi mudra* (pointing at something) or may be stretched out and be without the fruit in it. When seated, *Skanda* is found in between *Siva* and *Uma* or sometimes on the lap of *Uma*. *Skanda* is usually adorned with a *karanda makuta* on his head and other ornaments. He wears a *Channavira*.

This representation is commonly seen in metal images.

Subrahmanya

The son of *Siva* and *Parvati*, *Subrahmanya* is the most popular deity of South India. He is best known by the name of *Murugan* (Tamil) which means the most beautiful and the valiant. He is the originator of the Tamil language itself. He taught the language to Sage *Agastya*. He bears innumerable other names viz. *Vadivelan*- the lovely one bearing the Vel (the spear), *Kumaran*- the eternal youth and son of *Siva, Arumugan*- the God with six faces, *Devasenapati*- the generalissimo of the celestials, *Skanda*- the transcendent and *Kartikeya*- *Siva's son nursed by the six Kartik women* (pleiads in Greek mythology).

Skanda the name by which he is most popular in North India, is a lesser deity there-more often a bachelor.

Scholars of the British era and their followers thought that the worship of this form of God is pre-*Vedic* in evolution and therefore does not find a place in the deities of the early *Vedic* pantheon. *Skanda* mentioned in the *Rig Veda* is a general term to denote the *Brahman*, the Supreme Being. It was interpreted so that it did not relate to the *Subrahmanya* of the South. This shows that the *Aryan–Dravidian* racist theory was holding scholars so much in thrall, that they created a divide where none existed. Now, that the theory has been demolished, it is clear that such far fetched interpretations are unnecessary. *Brahman* is the ultimate formless reality and all Hindu images represent that reality in various forms according to the persuasion of the devotee. *Adi-Sankara* in his *Advaita* philosophy stresses this when he states that an ordinary person may go to a temple to worship God in the form of deities endowed with good qualities (*Suguna Brahman*). As he/she advances spiritually he gets into the concept of the formless God or *Nirguna Brahman*. When he reaches ultimate bliss, he merges into the divine or *Brahman* itself. *Jeevatma* (the soul of the person) and *Paramatma* (the universal soul) become one. The *Prahlada* episode where *Vishnu* emerged from a pillar eloquently illustrates this philosophy. *Skanda* figures in the great epic of *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas*. In the *Kumarasambhava* of *Kalidasa*, the great Sanskrit poet, extols him as the heroic son of *Siva* and the great commander of the celestials who were saved from the troubles of the mighty *Asura* (demon) *Tarakasura* or *Soorapadma*, the latter name by which he is better known in Tamilnadu and in the *Skandapuranam*.

The nature of worship of God evolves in relation to the culture and natural surroundings of the people; the Gods are endowed with the virtues and weaknesses of the people who worshipped them in the dim past. This is the scientific and rational view. Later influences of other religions or other sources also play a role. Anthropologically, *Muruga* worship represents a stage of development characteristic of people who lived in the hills, the association of the peacock as his vehicle, the simple spear and the romance of the God with the hunter girl, *Valli*, as portrayed in the Tamil *Sangam* Age lyrical poetry - all confirm the above view that the worship of the deity was an evolution from the soil. It also shows the intermingling of Sanskrit and Tamil languages and their common origin. He teaches the Sage *Agastya*, who has come down from the Himalayas the Tamil language. This shows that both languages lay claim to divine status. There are references to this form of the deity in the earliest *Sangam* literature and still earlier Tamil grammar, *Tol-Kappiyam*, which is about at least several thousand years before the birth of the Christ. Recently, it has been claimed that *Tolkappiyar* is *a Vedic Brahmin*. All scripts in India have a common origin in Proto- *Brahmi*. The *Bhattiprolu* casket in the Chennai museum in bi-script of Tamil and *Asokan Brahmi* confirms this. Therefore, there is no reason why languages though sounding different should not have a common origin since their antiquity is so hoary. According to the early Tamil literature, *Murugan* was the presiding deity of the *Kurinji* (hill and forest) country. The fact that his famous temples are all still on hilltops shows that he is connected with the ancient tree and serpent worship and deities worshipped along with such trees.

"*Su*" means happily wedded to the "*Brahma jnana*" - the supreme knowledge of the supreme being; "*brahmanya*" means one who tends to the spiritual growth of the aspirant. Thus the special feature of worship of *Subrahmanya* is that the worshipper will be endowed with super divine knowledge or *Jnana*. According to the legends, the son taught the spiritual truth behind the primordial sound "*Om*" even to his father. His simple spear, the "*Vel*" , is synonymous with *jnana Sakti*, the celestial power of *jnana* or divine wisdom and destroyer of all evils and ignorance.

Sukhasana

When *Siva* is seated alone, he is known as *Sukhasana.* The image should be erect. His left leg is bent and rests on the seat, while the right leg hangs down. The upper hands hold the axe and the antelope, while the lower hands are in *abhaya* and *varada* or *simha karna.* It is essential that neither *Devi* nor *Skanda* are present near *Sukhasanamurti.*

This representation is commonly seen in metal images.

Sulam

This is the weapon (trident) of Lord *Siva.* It is taken in procession on festival days. On the obverse, it may have a small figure of *Siva* as *Vrishabhavahana* (riding on *Vrishabha*) or *Ardhanariswara.* On the reverse, it is plain. When the obverse is depicted with *Pidari*, one of *Kali*'s most terrible forms, it is known as *Sulapidari.*

Sundaramurti

He was the last of the *Samaya Kuravars* (great saints of the *Saivite* religion) *Saivite* saints. His poems are also part of the collection of *Thevaram* hymns. He is represented as singing in ecstasy. His right hand indicates the pitch of his song, while his left hand beats time.

In mythology, he is supposed to have been a page boy of Lord *Siva.* While plucking flowers in *Kailasa*, the heavenly abode of Lord *Siva*, he cast amorous eyes on two ladies in waiting of *Parvati.* To expiate this sin, he was born in a *Brahmin* family in *Tirunavalur, Nadunaadu* near present Vriddhachalam in the 9th Century AD. He was brought up by the chieftain of *Nadunaadu.* His first attempt at marriage was prevented by Lord *Siva* in the garb of an old man. *Siva* claimed him as his slave, but later on ended up running errands for him. There are many miracles attributed to him. These helped to turn the common folk towards *Saivism.*

Tirujnanasambandar

As a child, when he cried at not finding his father (who had been away to take a holy dip), Goddess *Parvati* pacified the child with milk. The temple tank where it occurred is in *Thonipureeswarar* temple. The sanctum of *Thonipureeswarar* (Lord *Siva*)

is in the the lower floor of the *Sattanathaswamy* temple, Sirkali in present Nagapattinam district. The mother and father who suspected this were shown a vision of *Umasahita*. The child started singing Tamil devotional songs, which are compiled as *Thevaram*, along with those sung by *Appar* and *Sundarar*. He is represented as a child and as a youth. As a child he holds a cup of *Parvati's* milk in his left hand and his right hand is in *vismaya* pose. As a youth, he is portrayed with a pair of cymbals one in each hand. He lived a short life of 16 years. He performed many miracles. He performed pilgrimages to many *Siva* temples with *Appar*, who was quite old by then. He vanquished the Jain monks of Madurai in argument. This was decided by a miracle, when the palm leaf manuscripts of his songs did not burn while those of the Jain monks burnt. The practice of throwing into fire manuscripts which come out unscathed is *anal- vadam* (*anal* - fire; *vadam* - argument). The floating of manuscritpts when thrown into water is *punal-vadam* (*punal* - water; *vadam* - argument). This shows their acceptance by God. His palanquin was carried by *Appar*, since he was a small child.

Tripurantaka

Tripurantaka is the image of *Siva* where he is known as the destroyer of the three cities and their demons – *tripuras*.

According to legend three demons in the form of flying fortresses of iron, silver and gold were destroying everything. The celestials (*Devas, demi-gods)* were unable to fight them; they therefore appealed to *Siva* for redress. But they were so proud that they thought that their help was indispensable to *Siva* and offered to cooperate with him in the destruction of the *tripuras*. Though *Siva* did not need their help he accepted their offer out of his grace. The story continues in the *Yajur Veda* that *Siva* did actually fight with the three demons using his bow and arrows in destroying them.

The South Indian version of the same valiant deed of *Siva* is different. When everyone had prepared for a fight and *Siva* stood ready, all the Gods began to think that *Siva* could destroy the *Asuras* (evil celestials or Demons) only with their help. This thinking provoked the laughter of *Siva*. As he laughed at the ego of the Gods

and at their idea of helping him, *the Tripuras* were burnt to ashes. *Siva* never fought the demons.

Umasahita

Siva is represented as standing or seated with *Parvati* (*Uma*) beside him, either on the same pedestal or on a separate one. *Siva's* upper hands hold the usual emblems and the lower hands are in *abhaya* and *varada*. The *Devi's* right hand is shown holding a flower or in the *Kataka mudra* . Her left hand is shown sometimes in *varada* and sometimes resting on her seat.

This portrayal is commonly seen in metal images, in standing or seated postures.

Veenadhara Dakshinamurti

He is represented both in seated and standing poses. When seated, the *Veena* (string cum percussion musical instrument) is supposed to rest on the right thigh. Both the lower hands hold the *Veena*, while the upper ones carry the usual emblems, rosary and fire or rosary and snake. In metal images he is represented as standing. His lower hands are always in the posture of holding the instrument. In all the metal images, a separately cast *Veena* is intended to be provided in the hands as and when required and hence this instrument is not seen in the images. His upper hands carry the axe and the antelope. His right leg is kept firmly on the ground, while his left leg slightly bent, is placed a little forward.

Veerabhadra

He is represented as standing on a pair of sandals with a fierce face. Usually he has four hands and sometimes eight. His right hands hold the sword and the arrow, while the left holds the bow and the mace. When he is shown with eight hands, weapons of war are held in all his hands. He usually wears *Jata makuta*. Sometimes a royal headdress showing a *Linga* in the middle adorns his head. *Daksha* stands on his right side with the head of a goat and with his hands folded in worship. He (*Daksha*) is of small stature, evidently to indicate by contrast the hugeness of *Veerabhadra*.

Siva assumed this form when his father-in-law, *Daksha* insulted *Parvati* as a result

of which she committed suicide. To avenge the death of *Parvati*, *Siva* took the form of a gigantic figure to destroy the sacrifice organised by *Daksha*. When *Veerabhadra* came to the sacrificial area, *Daksha* was transformed into a goat.

This form is represented both in stone and metal.

Vishapaharana

In this depiction, *Siva* is represented as seated with his upper hands carrying the usual emblems i.e. axe and antelope, while his lower left hand is shown holding a cup and the lower right hand is in the *varada* pose. Sometimes the lower right is shown holding a snake. *Siva* drank and digested poison-hence the name. This was when the milky ocean was churned to get *amruta* (ambrosia) for immortality.

In some bronzes, *Parvati* is represented as preventing the Lord from swallowing the poison. When *Parvati* prevented him from swallowing the poison, it got held up in the neck portion making the neck blue. Hence, he is known as *Neelakanta* (one with the blue throat, *Neelakanta*, hence the name of the Himalayan peak). *Neelakanta* is a more popular form than *Vishapaharana* but less suitable as the subject of a metal image. Though this portrayal was popular, it was rarely represented in metal. *Suruttapalli*, 40 Kilometres from Chennai has a famous *Chola* period temple dedicated to Lord *Siva* in this mode. In this temple which has sculptures from the earliest *Chola* period, Lord *Siva* is reclining on the lap of Goddess *Parvati* after drinking the most toxic poison (*hala kala visha*) spat out by *Vasuki*, the great divine snake when the great milky ocean of the cosmos was being churned by the *Devas* and *Asuras* in an effort to get *Amruta* (ambrosia) in order to attain immortality. Only Lord *Siva* had the capacity to swallow this poison which was threatening to destroy the universe. This must be an allegorical reference to some early cosmic phenomenon. There are other excellent sculptures like one sculpture depicting *Siva* in penance standing on one leg, with *Vishnu* and *Brahma* worshipping him. The cognisance symbols, *Rishabha*, *Hamsa* (swan) and *Garuda* are at the base of the pedestal.

This refers to the story about *Brahma* seen in the description of *Brahma*.

VAISHNAVITE IMAGES

Vishnu

Vishnu, the preserver and the second member of the Trinity is an old *Vedic* God. He is mentioned in all the four *Vedas* - *Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharvana*. He is identified with the sun and a host of other divinities. In the *Sathapatha Brahmana*, he is included as one of the *Adityas*. In this context, *Brahmana* means commentary on the *Upanishads*. In the *Mahabharata* he is declared as the last *Aditya*, son of *Aditi*.

Aditi is mentioned in the *Rig-Veda* as the mother of the *Devas* and also the visible earth and beyond, i.e. all matter. She had eight sons of whom she cast away the eighth i.e. the Sun. These sons were called *Adityas*. In early Vedic times, they were six, then later seven and finally eight of whom the Sun was cast away. The six *Adityas* are *Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuna, Daksha and Ansa*. *Daksha* is frequently excluded and *Indra, Savitru* (Sun) and *Dhatri* are added (Dowson, John, 1982, p.4). They are thought of as the eternal sustainers of luminous life - i.e. an allusion to matter and anti-matter - matter is luminous and white, while anti-matter is black and absorbs all light. This is the conclusion of modern physics after much research and still a universal theory of physics has not been reached.

In the later period of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*, he is worshipped as the supreme deity and occupies a pre-eminent position in the Hindu Trinity among the followers of *Vaishnavism*.

He is represented in standing, seated or reclining posture. He has four hands normally of which the upper right holds a discus and the upper left carries a conch. The lower right is in the *abhaya* pose while the lower left one may be in the *varada* or *katyavalambita* pose or holds a mace. He has two consorts, *Sridevi* and *Bhudevi* respectively the Goddess of prosperity and the earth. They are represented as standing and sitting on the right and left sides of *Vishnu*. Both of them have a pair of arms; while the one carries a flower, the other hangs loose. *Sridevi* is identified with *Lakshmi*. She is worshipped independently as *Mahalakshmi* or *Gajalakshmi*, having two pairs of arms.

Vishnu is said to have manifested himself to his devotees in different forms in

different places and in each of these places he is worshipped in the form in which he is said to have appeared or incarnated.

Balakrishna

He is represented as a crawling child or in a dancing pose. When he crawls, his legs and hands rest on the ground. Sometimes he holds butter in one hand. His headdress resembles that of a *kondai*. *Krishna* is supposed to have played a lot of pranks in his childhood to entertain the *Yadavas* of *Nandagaon* in Vrindavan, near Mathura. His fondness for butter, which he usually stole, is one of the famous stories told about him.

Dhanvantari

He is the tutelary deity of Hindu medicine. He is represented always as seated with a pair of hands and in front of a bowl on which the discus and conch are seen. The right hand holds a vessel of medicine, while the left holds a bowl, with which the medicine is to be poured out.

Garuda

He is the vehicle of *Vishnu* and a mythical kite (half kite and half man). He is represented as a man with a beak like nose and two spreading wings. He is generally shown as standing or kneeling on one knee, the other leg being bent and firmly on the earth or a pedestal.

He has two hands, which are either in the *anjali* pose or outstretched with the palms turned upwards to receive the feet of *Vishnu* who rides on his shoulders. He is installed in every *Vaishnavite* temple opposite the central shrine.

The figures of *Garuda* are common and made in stone and metal.

Hanuman

He is portrayed in the form of a monkey with admirable human qualities. He is the son of the wind God, *Vayu*, a *Deva* (celestial) and his wife, *Anjana Devi*. He is, therefore, called *Anjaneya*. He was granted a lot of boons even as a child by the celestials. Therefore, he acquired enormous power and strength, both mental and physical. He is the greatest devotee of *Vishnu* in his *avatar* as *Rama*. It is said that

wherever *Ramayana* is recited, *Hanuman* will be present in spirit. He is *Chiranjeevi* (one who has no death). He is represented either in the *anjali* pose or with the right hand in front of the mouth in token of his humble devotion. The left hand and the tail hang down freely.

His figures are commonly seen in stone and metal.

Kaliyakrishna

He is represented as dancing on the hood of *Kaliya*, the serpent king. His left hand holds the tail of the serpent while his right hand is in the *abhaya* pose or outstretched so as to balance himself. The left leg is slightly bent and the foot is placed firmly on the hood of the serpent. The right leg is raised upwards, being bent at the knee, suggesting that a kick on the hood is contemplated.

These images differ from those of dancing figures of *Bala Krishna* and *Navanita Krishna* only in the fact that the dance takes place usually on the hood of the five-headed serpent king *Kaliya*, whose tail is held in the outstretched left hand. Other forms of the snake are also seen.

Krishna

He is the most popular of all the *avatars* (incarnations of Lord *Vishnu*). Among other deeds, he destroyed a number of demons. His achievements have been so great and glorious that among the incarnations of *Vishnu*, none receives more widespread worship than *Krishna*.

He is generally represented as standing with or without his two consorts, *Rukmini* and *Sathyabhama* on his right and left respectively. They are regarded as incarnations of *Sridevi* and *Bhudevi* respectively. *Krishna* is shown with a pair of hands. The right carries a peculiarly curved stick, probably the shepherd's hook or is in the *kataka* pose as if intended to receive the stick. The left hand is raised horizontally and bent at the elbow as if about to rest on the shoulders of *Satyabhama*. When represented with four hands, which is very rare, he carries the usual insignia of *Vishnu* in his upper hands. His head may be adorned with royal headdress or the hair may be tied up in an ornamental knot on the top of the head

and secured by flowers and the feather of a peacock. *Rukmini* usually holds a water lily in her right hand while the other hand is in *Lola hasta*. Sometimes instead of holding the flowers, the respective hands may be in the *Kataka* pose. The hair of both *Devis* is usually tied up in an ornamental knot and secured by flowers or the head may be surmounted by royal headdress.

The valorous deeds of *Krishna*, since childhood, including the circumstances under which he was born are detailed in the *Mahabharata*. He bore several names for having performed wonderful exploits and heroic deeds.

Krishna with consorts

In addition to his portrayals as a child, *Krishna* is shown as a man with his consorts, *Rukmini* on the right and *Sathyabhama* on the left. He is portrayed in the mature phase of the *avatar* (incarnation) as the ruler of *Dwaraka*.

Laksminarayana

As the name itself indicates, *Vishnu*, in the seated posture is in the company of his consort *Lakshmi*, who is on his left lap. The lower right hand is in the *abhaya* pose, while the lower left embraces the consort.

Navanitakrishna

He is represented as dancing on the hood of *Kaliya*, the serpent king. His left hand holds the tail of the serpent, while his right hand is in the *abhaya* pose outstretched so as to balance him. The left leg slightly bent at the knee joint, rests on the ground, while the right is lifted up and bent inwards as in dancing. The left hand is stretched out and thrown outwards. There was a serpent called *Kaliya*, who was terrorising people in *Vrindavan* on the banks of the river *Yamuna*. Krishna is supposed to have subdued him by dancing on his hood making him give forth his venom and go to the sea. The distinction between this pose and *Kaliya Krishna* is that in this pose he holds a ball of butter in his hand.

Narasimha

In this form he is represented with the head of a lion and a human body. He is shown as standing or sitting, either alone or with his consort. He is usually

represented with two pairs of arms. In some forms he has more than two pairs of arms. When represented with more than two pairs of arms, various weapons are associated with the hands. As *Narasimha* (sometimes specially distinguished as *Ugranarasimha*) he may be either seated or standing. In southern images of this terrible form, he is always shown in the act of either fighting or tearing out the entrails of the demon *Hiranyakasipu* (the father of his devotee *Prahlada*), whom he came to destroy; but in images from the north where *Narasimha* is less popular, he may apparently stand alone.

He is shown alone or with his consort, *Lakshmi*. When seated alone, with legs crossed in *yogasana* (meditative) posture, he is known as *Yoganarasimha*. In this pose, he is represented with only four arms, the upper hands carrying the usual symbols and the lower hands being stretched out and bent to rest on the knees. As *Yoganarasimha* he is seated in meditation with a band around one or both legs and with one or both hands directed downwards. In this posture he practises *yoga* to regain control of his fury after the destruction of the demon. When he is shown in the company of his consort, *Lakshmi*, who is seated on his left lap he is known as *Lakshminarasimha*. When he is represented as tearing *Hiranyakasipu*, the demon, either in stone or metal, sometimes he is shown with more than four arms.

It is said that *Vishnu* took the man-lion incarnation to kill the demon king *Hiranyakasipu* because he had condemned his son *Prahlada* to death for worshipping *Vishnu*. This king had earlier adored *Brahma* and secured boons from him that he would not be killed by God, man or beast, with any weapon during the day or night, inside or outside his house. Having obtained the boons, he became haughty and troubled the celestials (*Devas*). So *Vishnu* took the form of a man-lion and tore him with his claws during twilight, sitting on the door step of the residence of *Hiranyakasipu*. The circumstances under which *Hiranyakasipu* met his death fell outside the conditions of *Brahma*'s boon.

This incarnation is profusely seen in metal. *Prahlada* when represented is shown as standing in the *anjali* posture. *Yoganarasimha* and *Lakshminarasimha* are represented both in metal and stone in large numbers.

Panduranga

Panduranga of *Pandharpur*, near Poona (Pune), Maharashtra State is usually portrayed with only one pair of hands. They rest on the hips or hang beside his hips. The left one holds a conch, in the latter case. *Vishnu* is said to have appeared in this form to a *Brahmin* (*Brahman*) at *Pandharpur* in the Bombay Presidency (present Maharashtra) to reward him for his intense devotion to his parents. The *Brahmin* chose his parents in preference even to Lord *Krishna*, who manifested himself in physical form to the *Brahman*. This legend is datable to circa 15th - 16th Century AD.

Rama group

Rama, the hero of the great epic *Ramayana* and his consort *Sita* are popularly worshipped from very early times. His images do not exhibit either the four arms of *Vishnu* or the distinguishing symbols of conch, discus etc. Human in form but God in essence he is represented always as a royal personage of great beauty having ornaments etc that indicate his high birth and noble character. He is the embodiment of virtue and stands as the symbol of truth. In the *avatar* (incarnation), all the other Gods are present in one form or another. For instance, *Hanuman* is an *amsa* (element) of *Siva*. He is held in the greatest veneration by all Hindus. He is generally represented as standing with his consort *Sita* on his right and *Lakshmana* on the other. He has two other brothers, *Bharata* and *Satrugna*. *Rama* and *Lakshmana* are represented as holding a bow and arrow in the left and right hands respectively. It may be noted that the position of the hands are only shown. The bow and arrow themselves are seen only rarely. The headdress of *Rama* and *Lakshmana* are *kirita makuta* and *karanda makuta* respectively. *Sita* is an incarnation of *Lakshmi* with a lotus in the left hand, the right hanging freely. Her hair on the head should be shown securely tied in an ornamental knot, known as *kesabandha* and occasionally she wears *a karanda makuta*.

The story of *Ramayana* is popular and the heroic deeds of *Rama* are well known. Though the various episodes are represented in stone, painting, wood etc, in metal images he is represented always as standing with a pair of arms in the company of *Sita*, *Lakshmana* and *Hanuman* or with *Sita* only.

Ranganatha

Ranganatha of *Srirangam*, reclines on his serpent bed *(Adishesha)*. This form was an idol worshipped by the Kings of the Solar dynasty (*suryavamsa*) to which Lord *Rama* belonged. *Vibhishana*, the brother of *Ravana*, though an *Asura* by birth becomes the devotee of Lord *Rama*. He gets the idol as a present from Lord *Rama* to take to his kingdom, *Lanka*. On the way, *Ganesha* intervenes and makes him set it down at *Srirangam*.

Santanagopala

The iconography is similar to that of *Vatapatrasayi*, but it is without the banyan leaf.

Srinivasa

Srinivasa of *Tirupati* has his lower right hand in the *abhaya* while the lower left is placed against the thigh, suggesting that "the ocean of mundane activities, *samsara*, is only thigh deep to his devotees." His consorts accompany him. *Srinivasa* means one who dwells in *Sri*, i.e. Goddess *Lakshmi* . This refers to Lord *Vishnu*. The mythology of *Srinivasa* is narrated in *Tirupati Mahatmyam*, which narrates the story of his life on earth as a Prince of *Tirupati*.

Sudarshana Chakra (Discus)

This is usually seen in the upper right hand of *Vishnu*. It is identified with *kriyasakti* (kinetic energy) as distinguished from *bhutisakti* (potential energy). When personified, he may have four, six, eight, sixteen or thirty-two arms and each is associated with a weapon. Sculptures in stone or metal of '*Sudarshana*' are found in almost all the *Vishnu* temples while in some there are separate shrines.

Sudarshana has an outline of a wheel with a figure of the fierce spirit of the discus in a standing posture, within a hexagon formed by two interlacing equilateral triangles. He wears *Kirita makuta* surrounded by flames. On the reverse is the figure of four-armed *Yoganarasimha* on an equilateral triangle with its apex pointing upwards. The two upper hands carry the usual emblems of conch and discus while the two lower hands are outstretched and rest on the knees. The figure on the obverse has two

projecting tusks. The *chakra* in both of its forms is considered to be the destroyer of all enemies. The earliest depiction is considered to be the one in a separate shrine in *Varadaraja Perumal* Temple, *Kancheepuram*.

In some cases, the discus when personified is represented as a figure with a pair of hands in the *anjali* pose and having the *chakra* fitted on the head.

Tirumangai Alwar

He is represented as standing with a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left hand. In some cases the position of the hands suggests holding of the above weapons. The hair on his head is tied in a knot at the centre. As a rule he is profusely ornamented. He wears no sacred thread.

Tondaradippodi Alwar

He is represented as standing in the *anjali* pose and with a flower basket in one arm. He wears the sacred thread. His head always has a small tuft of hair in front or in the centre.

Vaikunthanatha

Vishnu is represented as sitting on a serpent couch in *Vaikunta,* his celestial abode. His left hand rests on the couch and the right hand rests on his knee.

Vamana

He is represented as a dwarf with a single pair of hands, a hunched back and protruding belly. He has on the *Jata makuta* of his head a small tuft of hair tied into a knot. He holds an umbrella. He carries a copy of the *Vedas* in his right hand and a spouted vessel (*kamandalu*) in his left hand. When he takes three strides he is known as *Trivikrama*, which means, ' the God who took three strides'. In this form he has four or more arms, two carry the usual insignia of *Vishnu,* the second pair of arms being in *abhaya* and *varada* poses while the third pair if any holds the mace and bow, (*gada* and *saranga*). His right leg rests on the ground while the left one is used for taking strides of the three worlds to measure them. King *Bali* is represented just below the left of *Vishnu*, in *anjali* posture.

It is said that King *Bali* with his powers acquired through religious penances had driven *Indra* out of his kingdom. This pained *Aditi*, his mother and *Vishnu* was requested to restore the celestial kingdom to *Indra*. Accordingly, *Vishnu* incarnated as *Vamana* (a young boy), came to *Bali* who was conducting a sacrifice and begged him for some land as a gift. *Bali* accepted promising to give whatever he wanted. *Vamana* asked for three paces of land, which was promised by the king. Immediately *Vamana* took the form of a gigantic figure and with one pace he measured the whole of the earth and with the second step the entire universe. There was nothing left for measuring out the third pace of his legs. For this the king offered his head to stand on. He sent him by the pressure of his foot to the *patalaloka* (nether world). The worlds acquired from *Bali* were given to *Indra*.

Vamana is represented both in stone and metal, while we come across *Trivikrama* in stone in large numbers and none in metal, except the one under worship in the temple at *Singanallur*, Coimbatore District. The most famous temple is at *Tirukoilur*, Villupuram District, where *Trivikrama* is depicted in stone as a huge idol.

Varadaraja

Varadaraja is the greatest among boon bestowers. His temple is in *Kancheepuram*. He has his lower right hand in the *varada* pose i.e. boon bestowing posture. The lower left rests on his hip i.e. *katyavalambita*. He holds a mace. His consorts accompany him.

Varaha

As stated earlier, the body has the human form while the head is that of an animal (boar). He is represented as standing or seated, either with his consort *Bhudevi* or alone. When standing alone, his upper hands carry the usual symbols, while the lower ones are placed on the hips. When standing with his consort *Bhudevi*, who is seated on his left leg, which rests on a serpent hood, his lower left hand embraces her. The lower right hand is in the *abhaya* pose. When seated with his consort on his left knee, he is in *Sukhasana* posture, the other features being similar to the standing form. Sometimes he is seen with *Lakshmi* on his left lap. In this pose, he is known as *Lakshmi Varaha*. He is called *Varaha* when alone, and *Bhuvaraha* when he is in the company of *Bhudevi*.

It is said that *Vishnu* took the form of a boar to lift the earth Goddess when the entire universe had become an ocean.

This incarnation is abundantly represented in stone, wood, painting and ivory and very rarely in metal.

Two forms are represented-*Varaha* in which he is standing with *Lakshmi* on his raised left knee and *Lakshmi Varaha* in which he is seated with *Lakshmi* on his left knee. In *Bhuvaraha* he bears *Bhudevi*, the earth Goddess, on his left knee, representing the earth which he came to rescue. In all three forms he has two pairs of hands of which the pair on the hind side hold the discus and conch.

Vatapatrasayi

The divine baby is shown lying on a banyan leaf holding one of his toes in his mouth. It is said that in this form he is brooding on the ocean about the chaos caused after the destruction of the universe at the end of an aeon.

Venugopala

He is represented as a young boy playing on the flute to entertain his companions and cows. He is shown as standing erect with his left leg resting on the ground and the right leg, bent at the knee goes across the left leg so as to touch the ground with the toes. Both the hands either hold the flute or are in the posture of holding it. In some cases he is represented with four hands, in which case the upper hands hold the usual emblems. He wears a *Kirita makuta* or a bunch of peacock's feathers and is accompanied by his consorts, *Rukmini* and *Sathyabhama*.

Yasoda Krishna

He is represented as lying on the lap of his foster-mother *Yasoda* who is feeding him. The real mother *Devaki* was put in jail by her brother *Kamsa,* the ruler of *Mathura* in present Uttar Pradesh. So the foster parents who were cowherds by profession took care of him.

Note : While indicating provenance in the next section, in some cases the erstwhile or undivided districts have been indicated. This is because the old British districts have been devided and their boundaries changed in recent years. It has not been possible to ascertain their new districts due to paucity of time.

Description of the Buddhist, Jain and Hindu (*Brahma, Saivite* and *Vaishnavite*) Bronzes

BUDDHIST BRONZES

Sl.No. 1. BUDDHA

Accession (Acc.) Number (No.) 1; Height (Ht.) : 29 cm. (Centimetres); Breadth (Br.) 11 cm.;

Provenance : *VELIPPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TALUK(TK.), NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT (DIST.), TAMILNADU (TN.);

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The *Buddha* is standing. A long *sanghati* (upper garment cloth worn in folds by *Buddha* and the *Buddhist* monks) with wave like horizontal lines hangs from neck to feet covering the entire body. The ends of the *sanghati* are in elegant zigzags at the bottom. Ear lobes are empty and elongated. The right hand shows *abhaya*, the *mudra* of protection. The palm is marked by a *chakra* placed within a geometrical figure formed by four bands, each band consisting of two parallel lines. This palm mark is referred to as one of the *uttama* (mark of the greatest) or *maha purusha lakshanas* or marks of Great Beings. The left hand shows *ahuya varada* or the *mudra* (sign) of inviting for conferring a boon. Its palm presents the same *chakra* design as noticed on the right. The mouth is firm suggesting determination and the lower lip is prominent. The eyes are open though not fully disclosing the downcast eyeballs placed within silver whites. A hook like mark made of silver called *urna*, which is also a *maha purusha lakshana*, is embossed on the forehead; its stem touches the hair. The hair on the head is in eight rows of stud like curls - the curls are so conventional that it is hardly possible to call them curls - and is surmounted by a tapering and flame like cranial protuberance called *usnisa* indicative of supreme knowledge, which is also a *maha purusha lakshana*.

Sl.No. 2. BUDDHA

Acc. No.: 2; Ht. : 49 cm.; Br. 20 cm.;

Provenance : *VELIPPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TK. NAGAPATTINAM DIST, TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* (lotus pedestal) in turn placed on a rectangular *bhadra peetah* (rectangular base). The right hand is in *abhaya mudra;* left in

ahuya varada. The palm mark on both hands is a full-blown lotus within four lightly concave single lines. *Urna* (curl of hair between the eyebrows of the *Buddha*) mark of the hook type is engraved and not embossed on the forehead. The lower lip is prominent and overhanging. The hair is in stud like curls of seven rows, the curls being clearly indicated and surmounted by a flame like *usnisa* (a flame like protuberance on the head of the *Buddha*, a symbol of wisdom). The nose is long and pointed. The face is round. The ear lobes are symmetrically elongated.

In excellence and finish, it is comparable with the Gupta type of *Buddhas* of North India.

Sl.No. 3. BUDDHA

Acc. No. 3; Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 17 cm.

Provenance : *VELIPPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa later half of the 12th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* attached to a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. The right hand is in *abhaya;* the left hand is in *ahuya varada*. The eyes are wide open with eyeballs marked in line. The lips are thick set or compressed with an attempt to smile. The nose is aquiline. The *Urna* mark described here recalls the fact that it is just one of the curls cut away that stuck to the forehead. The hair on the head is in five rows of curls surmounted by a flame like *usnisa*. The legs are elongated. The face is round. The body is in *samabhanga* (standing erect) pose covered by a long and simple *sanghati* with wave like horizontal lines, which hangs from neck to feet with ends in elegant undulations. This gives it a fanlike appearance at the bottom. The image resembles *Gupta Buddhas*.

Sl.No. 4. BUDDHA

Acc. No. 12; Ht. 106 cm.; Br. 58 cm.

Provenance : *THANJAVUR* TOWN (OLD SPELLING TANJORE), THANJAVUR DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* placed on a rectangular *bhadra peetah*, the latter supporting an elaborate *prabha* (circular arch) for the figure. The *prabha* consists of two shaft plates supporting a *makara torana* (arch with the decorative carving of a

Sl.No. 1
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 2
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 3
BUDDHA

crocodile) surmounted by a *kirti mukha* (lion's head signifying glory) or *yali's* (mythical animal - half lion and half elephant - some say they existed but are now extinct) head. The right hand of the *Buddha* is in *abhaya*, left in *varada*. The *Buddha's* garb consists of a long robe with folded edges wrapped over the body like the Roman toga leaving the right chest and arm bare and covering an undergarment. The ear lobes are elongated and bored. The face is oval, the nose being aquiline and pointed. The hair on the head is arranged into six rows styled to conform to convention, each curl giving the impression of being an ornament than of a curl. A high *usnisa* shaped like fire in five flames shoots up on the crown of the head suggesting the triumph of divine or spiritual knowledge. The image exhibits a tendency towards being muscular, the figure being realistic. In spite of careful moulding, the face lacks expression.

Sl.No. 5. BUDDHA

Acc. No. 4; Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *VELIPPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa later half of the 12th Century AD.

He stands on a high circular *padma peetah* on a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. He wears a long *sanghati*; the right hand is in *abhaya* and the left in *ahuyavarada*. The facial expression is happy, the face being round and the nose aquiline. The hair is in eight rows of conventional curls and surmounted by a flame like *usnisa*. This image also resembles the *Gupta* style.

Sl.No. 6. BUDDHA

Acc. No. 19; Ht. 73 cm.; Br. 34 cm.

Provenance : *NANAYAKKARA STREET*, NAGAPATTINAM, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* , which is like a real lotus in blossom, attached to a square *bhadra peetah*, which is meant to be a *simhasana* in as much as lions are carved in a sunken band on each side of the *bhadra peetah*. Besides, the *bhadra peetah* has four rings on each of its two sides, which are intended to secure the image to a base while it is being carried in temple processions. It will thus be clear that this image was one of the *utsava vigrahas* used by the Buddhists at *Nagapattinam* for being carried in procession when *Buddhism* was popular at *Nagapattinam*; hence its huge size.

The usual long robe with folded edges covering an undergarment is worn over the body exposing the right chest and arm. The right hand is in *abhaya*, the left in *Kataka* (as if holding the stalk of a flower, usually lotus or lily) and both are without palm marks. The face reminds one of *Amaravati*, *Goli*, and *Nagarjunakonda* style faces of the *Buddha*. The nose and the lips are carved to perfection, even the nostrils in the former finding a place. No *urna* mark is shown. The hair is in seven rows of conventional curls, surmounted by the *usnisa* in five flames. The ear lobes are realistic, though bored. The feet, hands, their fingers, the nose, chin in fact everything in this image is so close to perfection that the image appears realistic. The absence of the palm marks and the *urna* mark will also speak for the relative antiquity of the image as compared with the later images conforming to such conventions in depiction. The image is so different from any northern type that it can be termed as indigenous while in point of dating it may be ranked with the best specimens of Early *Chola* Art.

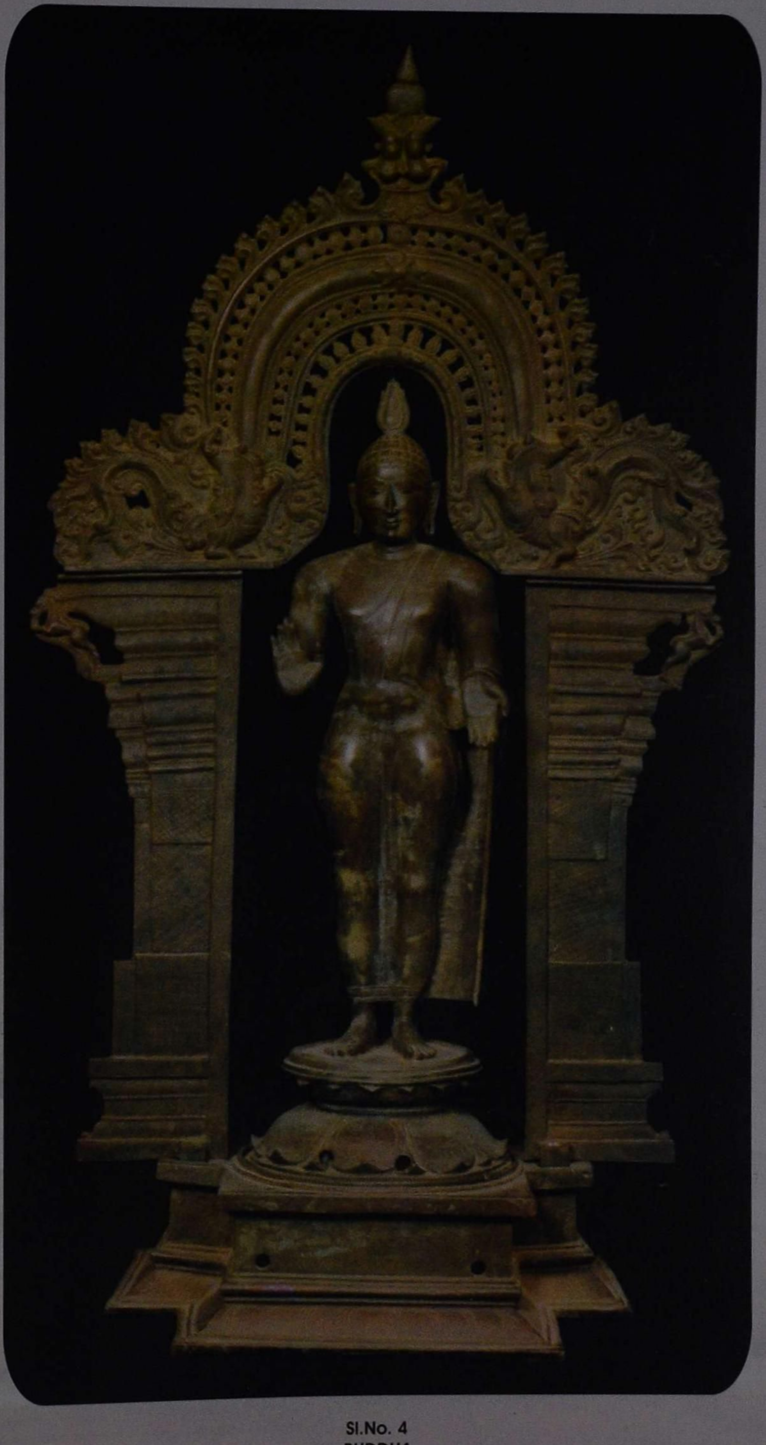
Sl.No. 7. ***BUDDHA***

Acc. No. 37; Ht. 74 cm.; Br. 37 cm.;

Provenance : *NAANAYAKKARA STREET*, NAGAPATTINAM, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The *Buddha* is seated. The hands are in *dhyana*. He is seated on an elegant triangular *padma peetah* mounted on a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. The latter is provided with holes one at either end and corresponding rings on its inside to hold the shaft spikes of a *prabha*. The *prabha* is in three parts, a lower part, a middle one and an upper one. The lower part, which is designed as the background of a *simhasana* (throne), is a broad and curvilinear plate with foliage designs at the ends flanked by rearing *sardulas* or *yalis* and with a horizontal projection in the centre intended to serve as a cushion for the body of the *Buddha* to lean against. There are foliage designs present on the cushion and also one at either end. The middle part is a circular aureole, which is secured to the lower one by means of an iron shaft (now rusty and broken) fixed to its back and going into two sockets present in the lower one. The aureole goes behind the *Buddha*'s head and bears a circular course of 35 flames over a similar course or band of foliage. The shaft that supported the aureole also supported the third and upper part, which is now loose owing to the shaft having rusted away. The third part is a purely decorative plate, circular for the most part but tapering at the top. It



Sl.No. 4
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 5
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 6
BUDDHA

consists of three creeper courses in the midst of heavy foliage and flowers such as lotuses, lilies etc. At its bottom a spread umbrella is attached which goes right over the head of the *Buddha*. The robe of the *Buddha* is folded at the edge that is so wide both in front and back that there is clearly the suggestion that the latter is a different cloth corresponding to the *uttariya* (cloth folded around the body used as upper garment). The earlobes are bored and are elongated, though proportionate to the face. The nose is pleasant with the nostrils also indicated and the lips quite real. The hair in seven rows of curls is surmounted by a flame like *usnisa*. The anatomy of the whole figure is smooth. The style suggests South Indian, comparable with later *Chola* bronzes.

To the lower part of the *prabha* are attached the figures of *Nagarajas* (Cobra considered to be the King of serpents), one at either end. They stand on either side of the *Buddha* and function as the *Chamara-bearers* (persons waving fly-whisk) of the *Buddha*, holding a fly whisk in the hand that is farther away form the *Buddha* and holding the hand that is nearer the *Buddha* in what is called the *vismaya hasta* or pose of wonder and devotion. Five serpent hoods placed over their heads indicate that they are *nagas* (serpents), while their personal attire and ornaments such as *karanda makuta* (the crown is in the form of a cone with the base at an angle of 30° pointed towards the apex; this shape is supposed to resemble the neck of a peacock) on the head, *patra kundalas* (ear rings in the shape of a palmyrah leaf) in the ears, necklace, waist girdle, wristlets, armlets, rings and belt and drawers and *yagnopavita* (sacred thread) in three strands indicate their regal if not their divine status. Their symmetrical pose by the side of the erect *Buddha* with their bodies inclined towards the central figure of the *Buddha* and their legs away from the *Buddha*, their anatomical features and the absence of any marks on their foreheads and palms all resemble so closely features present in some of the Andhra sculptures of the *Buddha* such as those from *Amaravati*, *Goli* and *Nagarjunakonda* that one cannot resist concluding that the *Nagarajas* in this bronze were perhaps influenced by the Andhra ones. The *Buddha's* life is so full of associations with the denizens of the *Naga* world that the early Buddhist sculptors derived from the *Nagas* a convenient decorative motif with which they decorated their sculptures especially when they portrayed scenes from the *Buddha's* life or from his past births called *Bodhisattvas*. The resemblance of these *Nagarajas* with the Andhra ones coupled with the determination of the *Buddha*-type as indigenous makes the style typically South Indian.

Sl.No. 8. BUDDHA

Acc. No. 77; Ht. 43.5 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : *AMARAVATI*, GUNTUR DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 3rd - 4th Century AD.

He stands with the right hand in *varada* and the left holding one end of his robe, which covers the left shoulder leaving the right one bare. The *Urna* mark is absent. The *Usnisa* shows protuberance but the curls are worn and smooth; it is not clear.

Sl.No. 9. BUDDHA (MAITREYA)

Acc. No. 46; Ht. 76 cm.; Br. 38 cm.;

Provenance : *NAANAYAKKARA STREET*, NAGAPATTINAM , NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

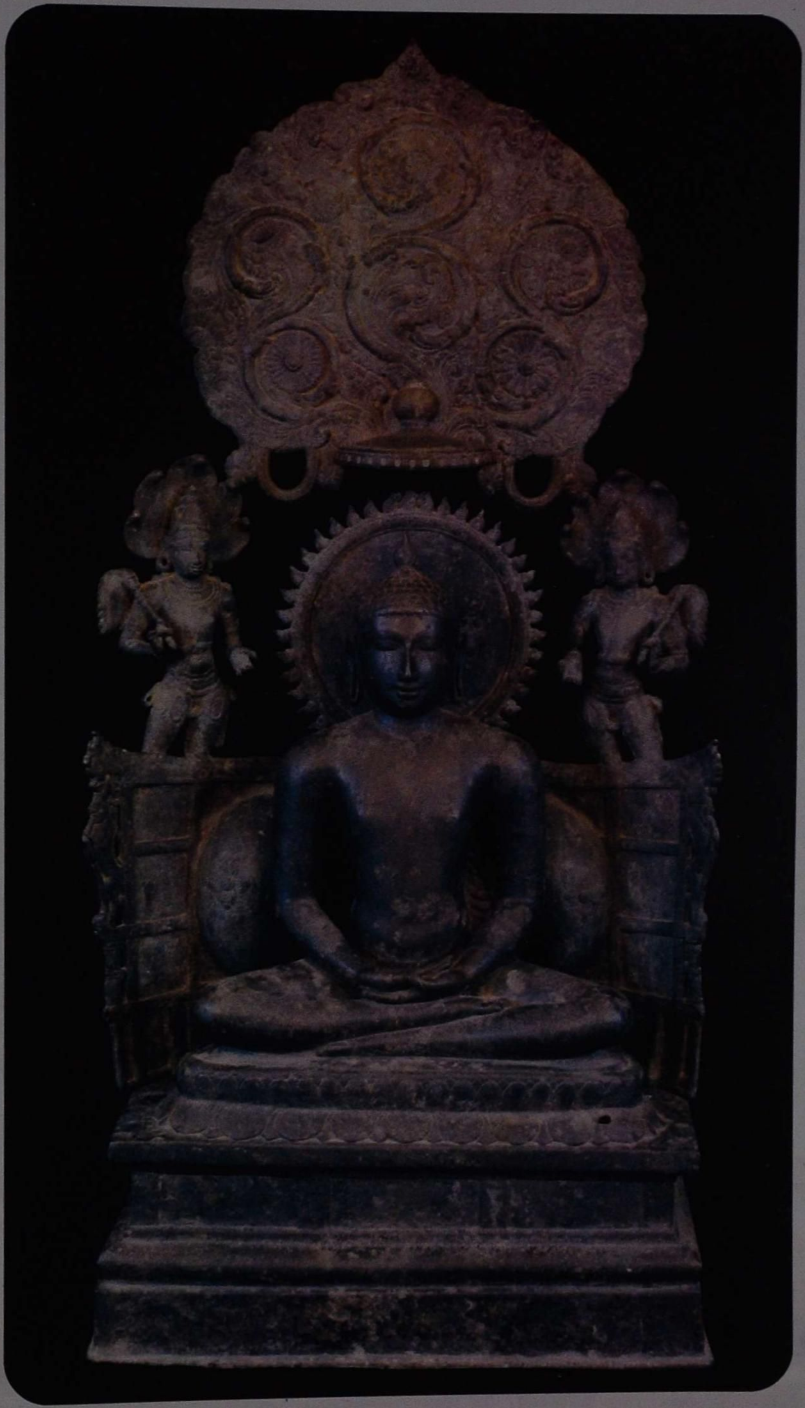
Period : Circa 13th -14th Century AD.

Standing in *tribhanga* (three bends or flexions of the body) on a circular *padma peetah* attached to a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. The latter bears a Tamil inscription in two lines.

"The Great Being *Akalanka* who is both mother and father of the world."

Akalanka is another name for the *Buddha*. The concept that he is both father and mother is worth comparing with *Siva* being described as *"jagat mata: pitarau"* (father and mother of the world) in the Hindu philosophy. This inscription is of great importance to our study of *Buddhism* that flourished in *Nagapattinam* in South India circa the 14th and 15th centuries AD. The record is a praise of the *Buddha* as *akalanka;* father and mother of the world. The image according to the donor's devotion and prayer stands for the *Buddha*. The iconographic features of the image helps to determine the age of the image as not later than the 15th century AD.

The *Buddha* has four arms. The upper right has a rosary garland, the upper left has a bunch of *champa* flowers, the lower right arm is in *abhaya* pose and the lower left is in *ahuya varada mudra*. Both palms have palm marks described in Sl.No.1 (Acc No.1). Heavy ornamentation in the shape of *Kirita makuta*, *makara kundalas* (ear ornament or ring in the shape of a crocodile), necklaces, three-stranded *yagnopavita*, waist girdle drawers with *simha mukha* (face of the lion) and tassels, armlets, wristlets, rings, *padasaras* (anklets) and *siraschakra* (hair clip on the back of hair plait) has been depicted. A *Stupa* design appears to mark the *kirita* (crown); from these, we conclude that *Maitreya* is the god represented.



Sl.No. 7
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 8
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 9
BUDDHA (MAITREYA)

Sl.No. 10
BUDDHA

Sl.No. 11
MAITREYA

The inscription on *Maitreya* who is the *Buddha* to come is appropriate indeed. This is comparable with South Indian Hindu bronzes of the *Vijayanagar* School such as of *Rama, Vishnu* etc; hence it is indigenous.

Sl.No. 10. ***BUDDHA (Maitreya)***

Acc. No. 53; Ht. 25.5 cm.; Br. 9.5 cm.;

Provenance : *VELIPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* attached to a square *bhadra peetah*. The latter has a Tamil inscription on the back portion which reads as *'Peria Pillai Nayanar'*. It states that the *Nayanar* Bronze (here the use of the word *'Nayanar'* to refer to *Maitreya* has been made by one *Peria Pillai*).

Sl.No. 11. ***MAITREYA***

Acc. No. 56; Ht. 39.5 cm.;

Provenance : *MELAYUR*, SIRKALI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

This gold plated *Maitreya* popularly called "copper gilt" is standing erect on a circular *padma peetah*, the front part of which is cut with a socket on its inside suggesting that this image was fixed on the top of a *prabha* belonging to some other bigger and central image during procession. This must have formed part of a group of processional images. His right hand is broken, but showing *varada mudra;* the left hand is broken near the wrist and is missing. The face is round reminding us of Javenese types. He wears a *karanda makuta* in low and rising tiers, with *stupa* in front and other decorative designs on it resembling Javanese designs. He wears *makara kundalas* in his ears. His hair is arranged wiglike, with a *siraschakra*. He wears a broad necklace with pendants as in images from *Java and Nalanda*, waist-girdle, a garland-like *yagnopavita* thrown over the right forearm as in *Pallava* sculptures, a long strand-like ornament thrown *yagnopavita-wise* extending up to the feet, a thick under-garment with lines, tassels, loops and securing strings arranged in elegant knots, a belt with clasp showing a flower in the place of the usual *simha mukha* are some of the interesting details in this image warranting an earlier age for it and an easy comparison with the Javanese of *Sailendra* times and *Nalanda* and *Kurkihar* types of the 9th Century AD. The *stupa* design on the *makuta* makes its identity as *Maitreya* certain. This image was found at *Melayur* near *Tiruvali*, the birth place of *Thirumangai Alvar* in the Sirkali Taluk, which is about 30 miles

from *Nagapattinam* along the sea coast. It vouches for the popularity of *Buddhism* outside *Nagapattinam* and shows that there were votaries of the *Buddha* even further north as there were further west. This was stolen in 1982 AD.

BUDDHA

Acc. No. 5; Ht. 27.2 cm.;

Provenance : *VELIPPALAYAM*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century A D

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* attached to a rectangular *bhadra peetah*, the latter bearing on its upper rim a Tamil inscription of the 13th and 14th centuries AD. This was stolen in 1982 AD. The description is being given based on the Accession Register.

BUDDHA

Acc. No. 8; Ht. 47.5 cm.;

Provenance : *NANAYAKKARA STREET*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century A D

The image shows heavy encrustation that has eaten into the metal in many places. The earlier part of the inscription is similarly eaten away. A long *sanghati* is present; the right hand is in *abhaya*, the left in *varada*. The face has suffered terribly owing to encrustation. The ear lobes are elongated and they have been bored. The *urna* mark has also suffered due to encrustation. The hair arrangement is in eight rows of studs meant to be curls and surmounted by the *usnisa* in seven flames. This was stolen in 1982 AD. The description has been given based on the Accession Register.

This information is recorded here in the hope that someday the above three Bronzes (Acc. No.5,8 and 56) will be traced like Dr. Douglas Barret, the then Curator of the British Museum, traced the *Sivapuram Nataraja* and restored it to India.

JAIN BRONZES

Sl.No. 1. MAHAVIRA

Acc.No. 389/57;Ht. 84.5 cm.; Br. 23 cm.;

Provenance : *SINGANIKUPPAM*, TINDIVANAM TK, VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

This majestic *Tirthankara* image is one of the five *Jaina* bronzes received for the Museum as Treasure Trove objects. The *Tirthankara Mahavira* stands in *Kayotsarga* (standing erect-posture) on *a Padma peetah* over a rectangular base. The right hand just above the wrist portion is broken and missing. The pieces on the lateral sides intended to receive a *Prabha* are broken and missing. The four rings attached to the lower part of the pedestal are meant for ropes to tie the image for taking out in processions. The engraving of the two seated lions made on the front side of the pedestal helps us to identify the *Tirthankara* as *Mahavira*.

Sl.No. 2. TIRTHANKARA

Acc.No. 721/74; Ht. 78 cm.; Br. 26 cm.;

Provenance : *GIDANGAL*, TINDIVANAM TK., VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

The *Tirthankara* is shown in standing pose on a *Padma Peetah* (lotus pedestal) over a rectangular base. On the backside of the pedestal there is a Tamil inscription *'Nayanar Athipathi Azhagar'* consecrated by *Vakkaram Kizhar*.

Sl.No. 3. TIRTHANKARA

Acc. No. 390/57;Ht. 54.5 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *SINGANIKUPPAM*, TINDIVANAM TK., VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

This standing *Tirthankara* is very similar to the one described in Sl.No.64 (Kannan,Dr.R. et al., 2001) and is in well-preserved condition. The figure stands on a circular plate. As such it might have been made to fit as a part of an ensemble. In the absence of the cognisance the figure can only be referred to as a *Tirthankara*.

Sl.No. 4. *TIRTHANKARA*

Acc. No. 705/73; Ht. 25cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUMALAI*, POLUR TK., TIRUVANNAMALAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

This bronze icon came from *Tirumalai* of Polur Taluk, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamilnadu. *Tirumalai* is the name of the hill on which a *Jaina* temple is housed. The village near to the hill is referred to in ancient records as *Vaigavur*. *Tirumalai* is an important Jain centre from the time of the early *Cholas* (9-10th Century AD). The earliest epigraphical record made in the 19th regnal year of the *Rashtrakuta* King *Krishna III* (957-58 AD) mentions the provision made by the servant of the queen of a local chieftain for a lamp to the *Yakshi* of this temple. The Jain temples here enjoyed continuously the patronage of succeeding royal houses. The famous *Chola* princess *Kundavai*, (11th Century AD), *Vidukathalagiya Perumal, an Adiya* Chieftain (12th Century AD) and *Rajanarayana Sambuvaraiyar* (14th Century AD) have made renovations and endowments for the Jain temple in *Tirumalai* (Krishnan K.G., 1981, p. 115 from Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001). The 15th Century AD Tamil literary work *Adinathar Pillai Tamil*, in its first invocation Chapter *(Kappu Paruvam)* mentions *Vaikai (Vaikavur)* as one of the important Jain centres of Tamilnadu (Adinathar Pillai Tamil, 1956, p.7 from Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001). The *Tirthankara* icon from such a place displays the long tradition of its place of origin.

The figure of the *Tirthankara* is depicted in seated *Ardha-paryankasana* posture on a rectangular pedestal. A beautiful detachable circular *Prabhavali* is provided. The *Prabhavali* contains the *Bha Mandala, Mukkudai*, the branches of the tree under which the *Tirthankara* attained *Kevalajnana* and two *Chamara* bearers. In contrast to the nude figure of the *Tirthankara*, the figures of the two *Chamara* bearers are fully dressed. The posture and ornaments of these figures are similar to those of the *Sivaganga Tirthankara* bronze described in S.No. 67 in "Icononography of the Jain Images in the Government Museum, Chennai" (Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001) . Though the *Prabhavali* and one *Chamara* bearer are missing in the *Sivaganga* ensemble, the remaining portions display a striking similarity with this bronze.

The figures of the *Chamara* bearers of *Tirumalai* ensemble are depicted with *Karanda*

Sl.No. 1
MAHAVIRA

Sl.No. 2
TIRTHANKARA

Sl.No. 3
TIRTHANKARA

◀ Sl.No. 4
TIRTHANKARA

Sl.No. 5 ▶
TIRTHANKARA

makuta, shoulder tassels, *Keyuras* (shoulder or forearm ornament), thick necklace, sacred thread and the *Udarabandha* (a band of silk or gold thread worn on the stomach). The subsidiary strands of the sacred thread branch out from the main thread and go through the *Udarabandha*, a feature often found in *Chola* bronzes. The 12th Century AD late *Chola* period *Vishnu* bronze housed in the National Museum, New Delhi is designed with a similar type of sacred thread (Sivaramamurti C., 1963, pl. 71a from Kannan, Dr. R., 2001, p.98). From its features the *Tirumalai Tirthankara* bronze may be dated to the late *Chola* period, Circa 12th Century AD.

Sl.No. 5. TIRTHANKARA

Acc. No. 108/49; Ht. 38.7 cm.; Br. 33 cm.;

Provenance : *SIVAGANGA*, SIVAGANGA DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

This late *Pandya* period Jain *Tirthankara* was purchased from a resident of *Sivaganga* in 1946. The *Tirthankara* is depicted in seated *Ardha-Paryankasana* (unlike *Padmasana* both the feet are not placed over each other; this is the common seated posture of even common folk in South India) on a nicely designed *bhadra peetah*(rectangular base). The *bhadra peetah* pedestal has a projection on either side over a *yali* figure (mythical animal with the face of a lion and the trunk of an elephant - (some contend that it actually existed but is now extinct), to receive the *Prabha*, which is missing. On the ends of the cushion shown at the back of the *Tirthankara* are two standing *Chamara* bearers. The *Chamara* bearer on the right side of the *Tirthankara* is missing. On the backrest, there are carvings including the figures of a *Yaksha* and *Yakshi* in dwarf size. The pose and the *asana* (sitting posture) with a well designed cushion are in the same fashion as seen in the famous late *Chola* period Nagapattinam seated *Buddha* bronzes housed in the Buddhist Section of the Bronze Gallery of this Museum.

Sl.No. 6. TRITHIRTHI

Acc. No. 393/57; Ht. 19cm.; Br. 14cm.;

Provenance : *SINGANIKUPPAM*, TINDIVANAM TK., VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

This is a beautiful *Trithirthi* bronze, which has the figures of three *Tirthankaras*. But in Museum Register, it is recorded as *Tirthankara*. The *Mula Nayaka* (Main

Tirthankara)is depicted in the *Ardha-Paryankasana* seated posture on a rectangular pedestal. The four legs of the pedestal are similar to those found in Karnataka and Western Indian Jain bronzes. An inverted 'U' shaped *Prabhavali* for the seated *Mula Nayaka* is designed with *Bha Mandala* and *Mukkudai*. Two *Alavattams* (circular plate like structure fixed on top of a long stick) one on each side are fixed at the back of the *Prabhavali*. These are usually carried when processions of deities and royalty are taken out. Two carved stalk like brackets, with a round top on which the other two *Tirthankara* figures stand, are attached at the dorsal sides of the pedestal.

The standing *Tirthankara* image on the left side of the *Mula Nayaka* figure is shown with a five-headed snake, which spreads its hood as canopy over the head of the *Tirthankara*. Over the snake hood is depicted the *Mukkudai* (triple umbrella) with a good floral design background. The presence of the five-headed cobra helps to identify the figure as that of *Suparsvanatha*. The figure of the *Tirthankara* on the right side of the *Mula Nayaka* is depicted with a *Prabhavali* topped with *Bha Mandala*. A *Mukkudai* is shown above the *Bha Mandala*. In the absence of the cognisance figure on the pedestal it is difficult to identify the figure of the *Mula Nayaka*. However *Trithirthi* groups of *Adinatha, Parsvanatha* and *Mahavira* have also been discovered in several places.

Trithirthi images were popular at Digambara sites and a good number of such sculptures datable to the period between 9th and 12th centuries AD are found in Deogarh and Khajuraho (Tiwari, Maruti Nandan Prasad, 1983, p.7 from Kannan, Dr. R. et al., 2001). The design of the pedestal, its carved brackets on top of which two figures of standing *Tirthankaras* are depicted and the posture of the *Tirthankara* figures show close resemblance to Karnataka Jain bronzes. From its features, this ensemble of the *Trithirthis* may be dated to Circa 11th Century AD.

Sl.No. 7. *YAKSHI AMBIKA*

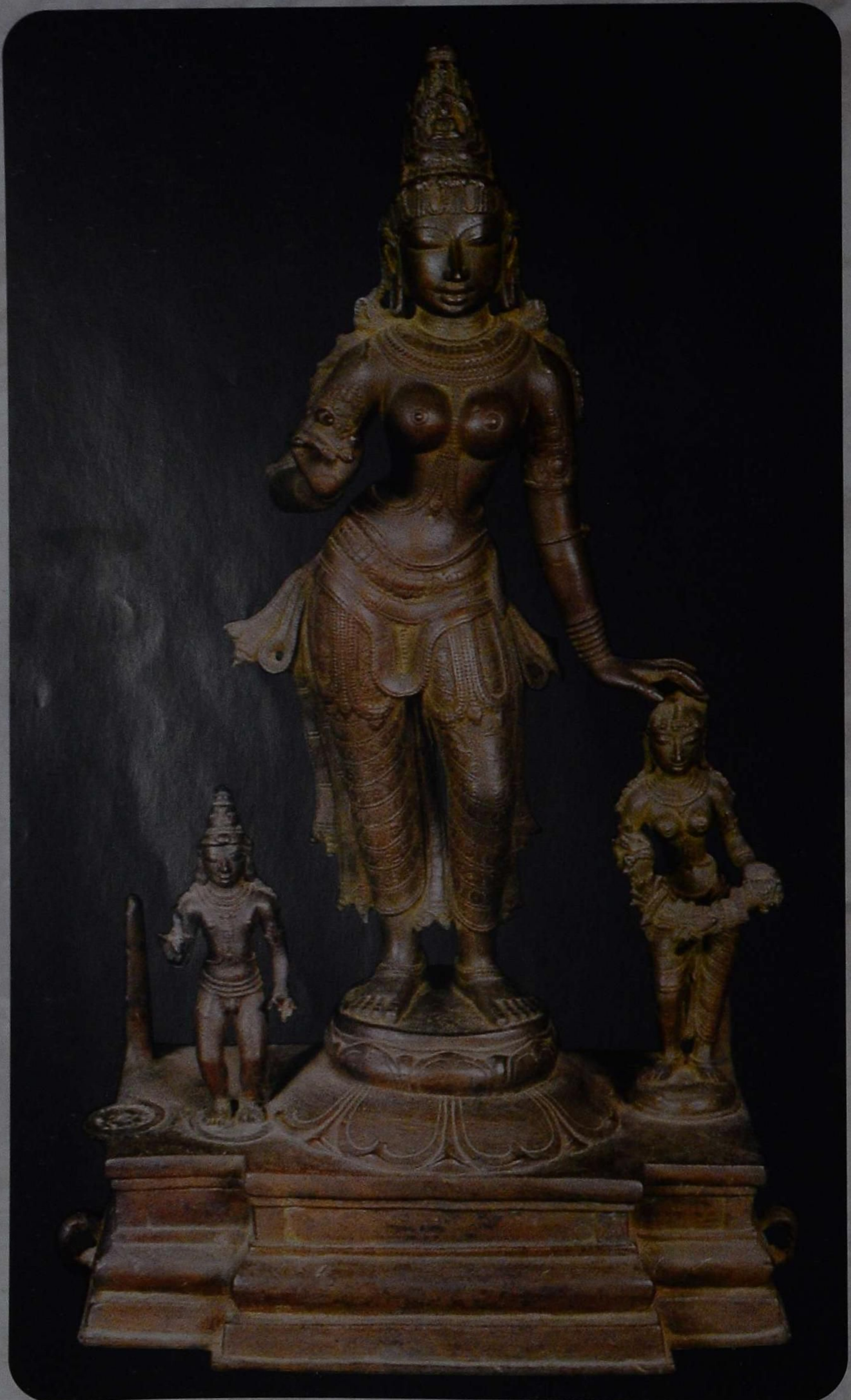
Acc. No. 391/57; Ht. 56 cm.; Br. 33 cm.;

Provenance : *SINGANIKUPPAM*, TINDIVANAM TK., VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Yakshi Ambika, the *Yakshi* of the 22nd *Tirthankara*, *Neminatha* is here depicted in *Tribhanga* (body bent three times at the knee, hip and neck) pose. She stands on a

Sl.No. 6
TRITHIRTHI



Sl.No. 7
YAKSHI AMBIKA

Padma Peetah (lotus base) over a rectangular pedestal. The pedestal is shaped like a building with a portion of the centre projected. The *Yakshi* rests her left hand on the head of her maid who holds a beautiful garland. Her right hand is in *Kataka* pose. On her side stands a small boy. The *Yakshi* has a set of thick necklaces on the usual design pattern of later *Chola* sculptures with elbow ornaments and bangles. Her lower garment with flowery ends and bows on the sides is tied in a loop on both sides with festoons and tassels. The design is elaborate. She wears a *Channavira* (an ornament consisting of three chains with a central leaf type pendant) with a central chain and a mango shaped pendant. One of the most important iconographic features of her form is the *Karanda Makuta* on her head. A little seated *Tirthankara* figure is depicted in the *Makuta*. This helps, as in the case of Buddhist icons of *Avalokiteshwara* and *Maitreya*, to identify the figure as that of a *Jain Yakshi*. The figure of her maid is charming with refined ornaments. Her hair-do with beautifully curled hair rings above her forehead may remind the lovers of *Chola* bronzes of the figure of *Sita*, the famous 10th Century AD bronze icon of the *Rama* group of bronzes from *Vadakkuppanayur* (a village in Nagapattinam Taluk in Nagapattinam district, now housed in Government Museum, Chennai). The small boy on her side reminds us of the usual pose and poise of the small *Skanda* figure of the *Chola* period *Somaskanda* ensembles. The boy also wears necklaces, *Channavira* (an ornament consisting of three chains with a central leaf type pendant) and hip ornaments. The depiction of the well-developed breasts of the *Yakshi* and her maid shows the lack of discomfort over depiction of the human body in Indian culture.

BRAHMA

Acc. No. 1; Ht. 56 cm.; Br. 44 cm.

Provenance : UNKNOWN

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Brahma is portrayed iconographically with four heads, the fifth having been plucked away by Lord *Siva*. The four faces are united at the ears. The four heads have four *kirita makutas* combined into one, the difference being shown as bas-relief. *Brahma* is seated on a *Padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He has a rosary and *kalasa* in his upper hands, while the lower hands are held in *abhaya mudra* and *varada mudra*. The *kalasa* is portrayed to show that there is no life without water. He is seated in *veerasana*. He wears large *kundalas*. There are two slender beaded necklaces. The sacred thread divides into four parts. The outermost two parts are short and beaded. The inner two parts are without decoration and reach till the loin cloth. The *Prabha* is double arched and has six flames on each side, the top central one being a *yali* having a flame on the head. There are two pronounced *makaras* at the base of the *Prabha*. As stated in the section on typology, *Brahma* has no followers like the *Saivites* and *Vaishnavites* for *Siva* and *Vishnu* respectively. His images are not common in metal. This is the only one in the collection of the museum in metal.

BRAHMA

Sl.No. 1
ADHIKARA NANDI

SAIVITE BRONZES

In the Ground Floor, we have placed the *Nataraja* in its context i.e. at the centre of the cosmos to show that this image symbolises creation and the whole cosmos. We have simulated a temple atmosphere with corbelling and a sanctum in the first floor. We have placed a bronze of *Varadaraja* with *Sridevi* and *Bhudevi* in the sanctum.

Sl.No. 1. *ADHIKARA NANDI*

Acc. No. 634/68; Ht. 74.5 cm.; Br. 32 cm.;

Provenance : *MADUKKUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

He stands in the posture prescribed in the *Silpasastras*. The upper hands carry a *parasu* and *mruga* and the lower pair is in *anjali*. Tassels indicate the lower garment. Three necklaces, *udarabandha* and *yagnopavita* are shown. *The siraschakra* is seen at the back.

Sl.No. 2. *AIYANAR ON ELEPHANT*

Acc. No. 320; Ht. 34 cm.; Br. 25 cm.;

Provenance : *ULUNDANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THIRUCHIRAPPALLI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This bronze image shows *Aiyanar* riding on an elephant with two tusks. Holding a lotus flower in its trunk, the elephant is elaborately decorated with lotus medallions on the top of its head, and *kirti mukha* (faces of glory) on its fore knees. A small figure of an attendant is seen behind *Aiyanar*. He holds a goad. The nose is pointed and a bell hangs from the seat tassel on the elephant.

Sl.No. 3. *AIYANAR ON ELEPHANT*

Acc. No. 778/75; Ht. 23.5 cm.; Br. 11.5 cm.;

Provenance : *PARITHIYUR*, COIMBATORE DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This piece is similar to Acc. No. 320 except that *Aiyanar* himself holds the goad in his right hand while the attendant is free.

Sl.No. 4. AIYANAR ON AN ELEPHANT

Acc. No. 317; Ht. 57 cm.; Br. 45 cm.;

Provenance : *THOGUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This seventeenth Century bronze image of *Aiyanar* riding an elephant with two tusks is extremely rare. Where it was originally worshipped is uncertain - it is likely that a large image of this extremely beautiful piece was commissioned for a village shrine, but there is no evidence of *Aiyanar* being worshipped in major *Siva* temples. Cast separately from his elephant mount, *Aiyanar* wears three *Saivite* symbols in his hair, which is spread out; a snake on the left, a skull in the centre and a crescent moon on the right. Holding a lotus flower in its trunk, the elephant is elaborately decorated with lotus medallions on the top of its head, and *kirti mukha* (faces of glory) on his fore knees. A small figure of an attendant is seen behind *Aiyanar.* He holds a goad. A garland of skulls is seen on the back of the elephant.

Sl.No. 5. AIYANAR

Acc. No. 1836 / 94; Ht. 28.5 cm.; Br. 16.5 cm.;

Provenance : *TINDIVANAM*,TINDIVANAM TK., VILLUPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This seventeenth Century bronze image of *Aiyanar* is seated on a *bhadra peetah.* The cognisance symbol as in a Jain bronze is depicted as a bas relief on the front of the pedestal. He holds a *sendu* (Tamil – a stick with a crooked top). The top portion is broken. He keeps his left hand on the left thigh. He is seated in *Veerasana.* The *yoga patta* (a band used by great teachers to keep their legs in a particular pose during their *yoga* practice) from the hip goes around the raised left leg. He wears *ratna kundalas* (ear rings with precious stones set in them), two necklaces, *skandhamala, udarabandha,* lower garment, *padasara* and rings on the fingers.

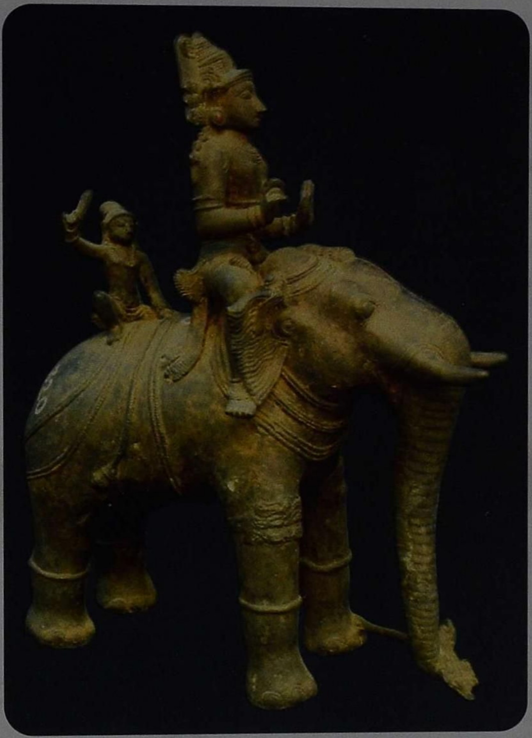
Sl.No. 6. APPAR

Acc. No. 343; Ht. 57 cm.; Br. 20 cm.

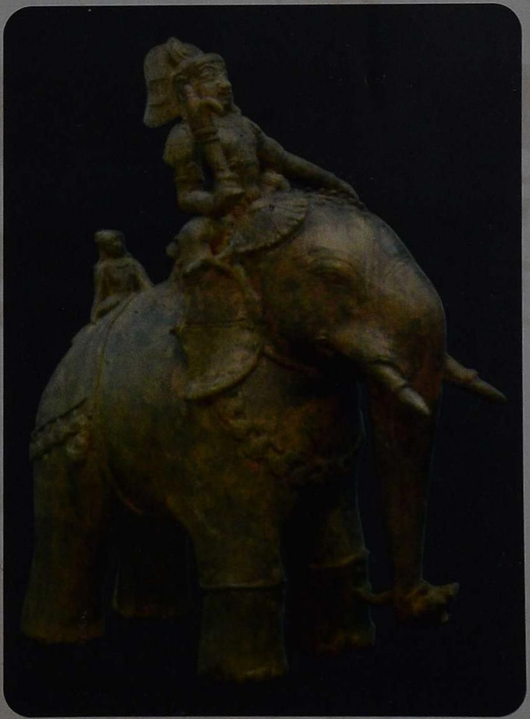
Provenance : *VEMBAVUR*, PERAMBALUR TK., PERAMBALUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The hair is near to the head. His hands are in *anjali,* with the *Uzhavara Padai*



Sl.No. 2
AIYANAR ON ELEPHANT



Sl.No. 3
AIYANAR ON ELEPHANT

◀ Sl.No. 4
AIYANAR ON ELEPHANT

Sl.No. 5 ▶
AIYANAR

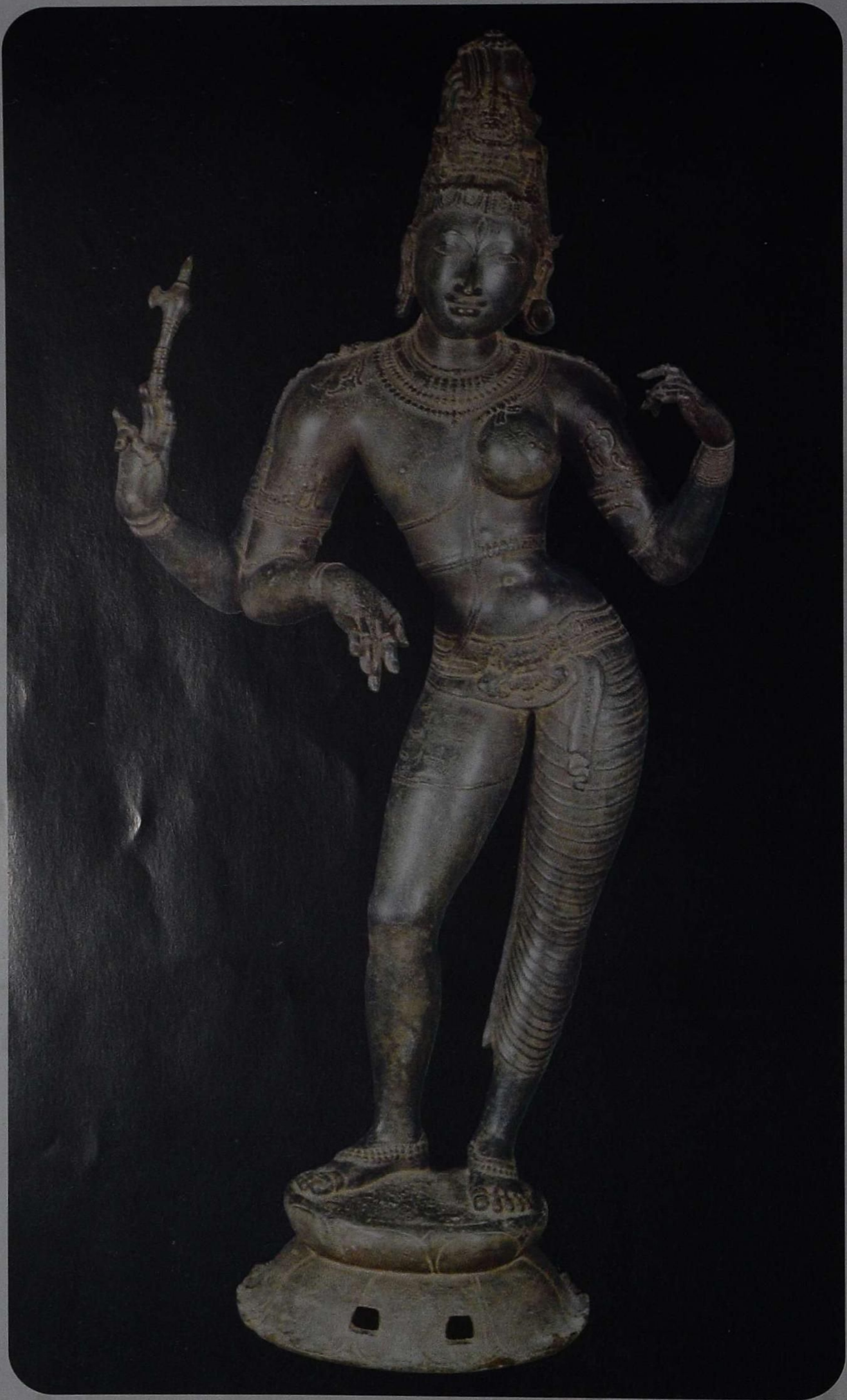
▲ Sl.No. 6

Sl.No. 8 ▼

APPAR

Sl.No. 9 ▼

▲ Sl.No. 7



Sl.No. 10
ARDHANARISWARA

(Tamil - spud) leaning against the right shoulder. The upper necklace and wristlets are each a simple band with a large clasp; the lower necklace hangs between the breasts. It is composed of *Rudraksha* beads as are also the chaplet on the head and a string round the upper part of each arm. A short garment is shown worn around the loins.

Sl.No. 7. APPAR

Acc. No. 1648/85; Ht. 38 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : *PERUMBALUR,* UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The hair on the head is nearly invisible. His hands are in *anjali,* with the *Uzhavara Padai* (Tamil - spud) leaning against the left shoulder. He wears three chains with a single *Rudraksha* bead in each. The earlobe is elongated as in depictions of the *Buddha.* He has *Bahu valayas* and *kankanas.* A short garment is shown worn around the loins.

Sl.No. 8. APPAR

Acc. No. 47-8/36; Ht. 39.5 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *KODIAKKADU,* VEDARANYAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

He is in standing pose on a lotus pedestal attached to a *bhadra peetah.* His hands are in *anjali,* with the *Uzhavara Padai* (Tamil - spud) leaning against the left shoulder. The top portion is broken and missing. The earlobe is elongated. A short garment is shown worn around the loins. He has no other ornaments.

Sl.No. 9. APPAR

Acc. No. 131/ 50; Ht. 69 cm.; Br. 22 cm.;

Provenance : *MARIYUR,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The hair on the head is almost invisible. His hands are in *anjali mudra* with a rosary (*rudraksha mala*). He wears three chains with a single *rudraksha* bead in each. The earlobe is elongated as in depictions of the *Buddha.* He has *bahu valayas* and *kankanas* of *rudraksha.* A decorated short garment is shown worn around the loins.

Sl.No. 10. ARDHANARISWARA

Acc. No. 447/60; Ht. 102 cm.; Br. 46 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVENGADU,* MAYILADUTHURAI TK, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

This is a unique and graceful image of *Ardhanarisvara* in *tribhanga* posture. The right half depicts the *Siva* aspect while the left depicts *Parvati*. The upper right holds the *parasu* and the lower right is in the posture of resting on the bull. The right half of the *makuta* is portrayed as a *jata makuta* and the left as a *karanda makuta*. The right ear lobe wears a *makara kundala* and the left a *patra kundala*. A *siraschakra* is shown. The left half of the torso bears a well-treated and prominent breast. There is a majestic and sweeping curve at the left hip. The only left arm is in *kataka* pose. *Haaras, keyuras, kankanas, udarabandha* and *upavita* are beautifully decorated. The *katisutra* has the *kirti mukha* fastening. The *vastra* on the left is shown below the knee, the left leg is firmly placed on the pedestal and the right is gracefully bent. The whole figure stands on a lotus pedestal, which has two square holes at the bottom.

There is an inscription at *Tiruvenkadu* during the 29th regnal year of *Rajadhiraja*, which refers to the *Ardhanarideva* installed in the temple.

An inscription of 1047 AD lists the various jewels presented to the *Ardhanariswara* image. As such gifts usually are made either at or soon after the consecration of the image, the image must have been presented either that year or a little earlier.

Though each half of the figure is physically the opposite of the other, with every part of the anatomy precisely rendered, the effect is not as incongruous as one might expect. The details of each half are skilfully rendered so that they concentrate our attention upon half the image at a time. *Parvati* is standing in the *dwibhanga* (two bends) posture, while *Siva* is in *tribhanga* (three bends). *Siva* infact appears to be supporting the willowy *Parvati*, who is leaning on him.

As *Siva* usually appears with four hands and *Parvati* with two, so naturally in this image, he has two hands and she, one. *Parvati*'s arm is round, smooth and gracefully bent. Her torso is treated with great sensuousness. In contrast, *Siva*'s torso and his broad chest exude a sense of firmness, the masculine aspect.

Siva's *Doha* (shorts or short cloth i.e. the traditional *dhoti* tied-up) is folded and tied around his upper thigh so that it leaves most of his leg bare. Though the leg appears relaxed with the knee bent, its rippling muscles appear to support the weight of the whole body. As required by the androgynous figure, shorts are seen on the right thigh while there is regular garment reaching to the ankle on the left leg. *Parvati*'s leg is straight and lithe, its femininity further emphasised by an almost transparent lower garment that clings to her leg. The rhythmic folds of the lower garment that fall like waves at regular intervals add to its fluidity.

Walking around and standing by the side of *Parvati*, one sees in her profile a voluptuously formed female. Similarly, from *Siva*'s side one sees an athletically built, relaxed male.

Sl.No. 11. BHADRAKALI

Acc. No. 284; Ht. with *prabha* 62 cm.; Br. 48 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This does not differ from other *Kali* figures except that it has additional arms characteristic of *Bhadrakali*. The hands hold the following: discus, conch; drum, noose; sword, shield; trident and skull-cup.

Sl.No. 12. BHAIRAVA

Acc. No. 245; Ht. 49 cm.; Br. 23 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

The pedestal is modern. Four hands are found, the upper ones carrying the *tomara* (club), and *chamara* (fly-whisk) and the lower sporting the *abhaya mudra* and holding a skull-cup. The dog, which is usually present, is absent in this case. This figure is crude and very corroded with *patra kundalas* in both the ears.

Sl.No. 13. CHANDIKESWARA

Acc. No. 332; Ht. 55 cm.; Br. 20 cm.;

Provenance : *NIDUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The general treatment including that of the necklaces suggests that it should perhaps be regarded as *Chola* type, though there is no trace of projecting elbow ornaments. *Makara kundalas* are worn. The hands are in *anjali mudra*. The groove on the upper part of left arm in which the axe should fit is shown.

Sl.No. 14. CHANDIKESWARA

Acc. No. 331; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 16 cm.;

Provenance : *OKKUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

In this image, the necklaces depart much more definitely from the form characteristic of images of *Chola* type and there is no trace of projecting elbow ornaments. The headdress is very peculiar, especially its ornamental ribbon with flower ornament in front and behind and the elaborate bows at the sides. The *kesabandha* is very elaborate and replaces the more common *jata makuta*. Earrings are absent. Hands are held in *anjali mudra*. The axe rests against the right arm.

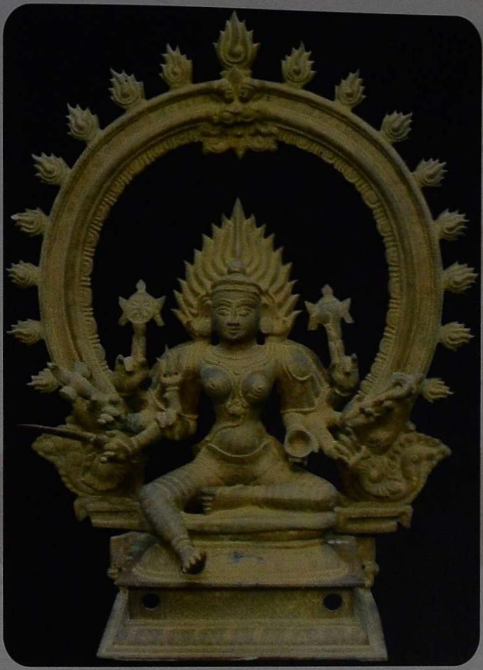
Sl.No. 15. CHANDIKESWARA

Acc. No. 448/60; Ht. 66 cm.; Br. 38 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVENKADU*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The figure is two handed and is seated on a *bhadra peetah*. The right hand is in *Kataka* posture suggesting the presence of a *parasu*; the left is in the *ahuya varada* (inviting people in order to confer boons on them) pose. It also looks like *simha karna* from another angle. The left leg is folded and rests on the pedestal while the right hangs down and is supported on a lotus flower. *Yagnopavita* and *udarabandha* are seen. He wears a *jata makuta*. The face is full of grace and charm.



▲ Sl.No. 11
BHADRAKALI

▲ Sl.No. 12
BHAIRAVA

Sl.No. 13
CHANDIKESWARA ▼

Sl.No. 14
CHANDIKESWARA ▼

Sl.No. 15
CHANDIKESWARA

Sl.No. 16. CHANDRASEKHARA

Acc. No. 203; Ht. 55 cm.; Br. 40 cm.;

Provenance : *PANAGATTANGUDI*, NANNILAM TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This is a *Chola* period image. The upper arms have the axe and antelope and the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*. The median loop of the girdle is broad and shallow. The antelope's head is not twisted, but the whole animal faces away from *Siva* instead of towards him. Anklets are depicted on both the legs. The crescent moon is clearly shown on the left half of the headdress a little above the middle.

Sl.No. 17. CHANDRASEKHARA

Acc. No. 208; Ht. 27 cm.; Br. 17 cm.;

Provenance : *SETTIPULAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This image is similar to Acc. No. 203. It also has stylistic details. *Siva* carries the axe and antelope in his upper hands and has the lower pair of arms in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*. A snake is coiled round the headdress above the jewel that decorates the middle of its base in front and below the crescent. A face looks out from the left side of the headdress above the snake and a similar one from the right earring. A snake is coiled round each wrist, hanging down over the hand. The sacred thread is twisted once round the wrist band, the sides of which are joined by a pair of bands to a pendant hanging between the breasts from the lower necklace. Another short band joins the upper end of the right and one of these bands with the middle of the waist band where the sacred thread twists round it. The tail and face of the antelope are turned towards *Siva*. The lower garment protrudes at the sides just above the knee. There is an object which is like the head of the snake twisted around the wrist on the palm which is in *varadamudra*. The hand in *abhaya mudra* also has a similar feature.

Sl.No. 18. CHANDRASEKHARA

Acc. No. 1546/89; Ht. 26 cm.; Br. 9 cm.;

Provenance : *KANNAMANGALAM*, ERSTWHILE NORTH ARCOT DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 18th Century AD.

This is a crude image standing on a *padma peetah* fixed on a square base. The

upper arms have the axe and antelope and the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*.

Sl.No. 19. CHANDRASEKHARA

Acc. No. 1341/85; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 16 cm.;

Provenance : *NADUKOTTAI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

This is similar to Acc. No.1546/89 except that the lower left hand is in *ahuya mudra*. The head has *kesa bandha*, elaborate hair ornament, two necklaces, shoulder tassels, *yagnopavita*, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, Keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras*. His lower garment is well decorated. The upper arms have the axe and antelope. The features on the face and the ornamentation make us to date it to circa 15th Century AD.

Sl.No. 20. DEVI

Acc. No. 1869/96; Ht. 36 cm.; Br. 20.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KIDANGAL*, NAGAPPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The image is in standing pose with a single pair of hands. It appears to be part of an ensemble as the base is provided with a base pedestal attachable to a larger one. She wears a slender *Karanda-Makuta* with a round halo at the back. The head dress and ear ornaments are richly decorated. Necklace, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras* are shown. Her lower garment is well ornamented. She holds a lotus flower in her right hand and keeps her left hand in *katya valambita mudra*. It is quite interesting to find a bronze with typical Kerala features in a bronze recovered from *Chola* territory.

There is a rod behind the halo to place it in an ensemble.

Sl.No. 21. DEVI

Acc. No. 1870/96; Ht. 28.5 cm.; Br. 16.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KIDANGAL*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This image is very similar to Acc. No. 1869/96 except two differences. The previous one

Sl.No. 16

CHANDRASEKHARA

Sl.No. 18

Sl.No. 19

Sl.No. 17

DEVI

▲ Sl.No. 20

▲ Sl.No. 21

◀ Sl.No. 22

has a rectangular face while this one has a square face. The three fingers of the left hand kept in *katya valambita mudra* are above the front fold of the lower garment in the previous one but in this bronze all the five fingers are exposed over the folds of the lower garment.

Sl.No. 22. DEVI

Acc. No. 307/55; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Goddess probably *Parvati* stands on a double circular *asana*, which is placed on a separate low *bhadra peetah*. The figure wears a *karanda makuta* with a *prabha* around it probably based on ancient sculptural representations of a *prabha*. A long plate is attached at the back of the figure probably to hold a *chatra* above. Her hand holds a lotus bud with its stalk and her left hand is in the *katyavalambita* pose. The ornaments are elaborate but the general effect is that of an ancient figure.

Sl.No. 23. DEVI

Acc. No. 78-7/43; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *SEMANGALAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 19th Century AD.

Devi standing on a low circular *peetah* over a *bhadra peetah* wearing *jata makuta, yagnopavita, katisutra*, armlets, wristlets and *kundalas*. The right hand is in the *kataka mudra* and left in *lola*.

Sl.No. 24. DEVI

Acc. No. 172/50; Ht. 60 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *KADUVANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

The Goddess stands on a *padma peetahover bhadra peetah*. Wears *karanda makuta, haaras* and the lower garment, which is in folds. She holds a lily in her right hand and the left is in *lola hasta*. On both the arms there is a *Bajibandha* like ornament, a feature usually found in figures of the *chola* type. The right leg of the figure is slightly in advance and the figure is bent towards the right.

Sl.No. 25. DEVI

Acc. No. 1198/84; Ht. 57 cm.; Br. 22 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Devi stands on a high circular *padma peetah* over a high *bhadra peetah*. The right hand is in *kataka* pose while the left is in *lola*. *A karanda makuta* with a head band, *makara kundalas*, necklaces, *skandhamalas, siraschakra* and *yagnopavita* are seen. The drape is heavy. The pedestal has four rings at the bottom.

Sl.No. 26. DURGA

Acc. No. 268; Ht. with *prabha* 62 cm.; Br. 43 cm.;

Provenance : *RAYANALLUR*, TIRUTTURAIPPUNDI TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The upper right arm carries the discus and the left a conch curled to the right (*valampuri*); one of the lower arms is broken and missing, and the other is in *katyavalambita mudra* (keeping the hands on the hip). *Makara kundalas* are worn by the deity. She wears a *Channavira*. The small size of the flames on the *prabha*, on the discus and conch, as well as the treatment of the projecting parts of the girdle cloth suggest close affinity with images of the *Chola* type; but the face suggests that it belongs to circa 15th century AD. The workmanship of the *prabha* forms a striking contrast to this, being particularly good.

Sl.No. 27. DURGA

Acc. No. 290/54; Ht. 28.5 cm.; Br. 16.5 cm.;

Provenance : *PUDUKKUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The upper right arm carries the discus and the left a conch; the lower right arm carries something in the palm, the other is in *katyavalambita mudra* (keeping the hands on the hip). *Makara - kundalas* are worn by the deity. She wears a *channavira*. The flames on the *prabha* and the features of the face and body suggest close affinity with images of the Kerala type but it was found in the *Chola* heartland. The lower garment is elaborately carved.

Sl.No. 24

DEVI

Sl.No. 23

Sl.No. 25

Sl.No. 26
DURGA

Sl.No. 27
DURGA

Sl.No. 28
DURGA

Sl.No. 29
DURGA

◀ Sl.No. 30
GANESA

Sl.No. 31 ▶
GANESA

Sl.No. 28. *DURGA*

Acc. No. 686/72; Ht. 34.5 cm.; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : *CHETTIPULAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

This is an excellent *chola* piece depicted in standing pose on a *padma peetah* fixed on a square pedestal. She carries the discus and the conch; the lower right arm is in *abhaya mudra* while the lower left is in *katyavalambita mudra* (keeping the hands on the hip). *Makara kundalas* are worn by the deity. She wears a *kuchabandha, channavira,* decorated lower garment and *padasaras.* The oval face, the *karanda makuta,* ornaments and other features make us date it to the 11th century AD.

Sl.No. 29. *DURGA*

Acc. No.124/50; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 20 cm.;

Provenance : *MARIYUR,* ARANTHANGI TK., PUDUKOTTAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

This is a standing figure. The figure is tall and slender and wears an elongated *kirita.* The *siraschakra* is present. The waist is unnaturally low. She has a discus in her upper right hand and a conch in her upper left. The lower right hand is in *abhaya* and there is a parrot in the lower left hand. She is also called, in view of the emblems of the *Vishnu* she holds, as *Vishnu Durga.*

Sl.No. 30. *GANESA*

Acc. No. 1339/ 85; Ht. 35 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : *NADUSIKKOTTAI,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This deity wears a conical *makuta,* a necklace, *keyuras, kankanas, yagnopavita, udarabandhaa* and lower garment. *Kinkinis* (a chain on the legs with bells) on both the legs are seen. The *makuta,* necklaces and general style of this image suggest that it is of the early *Vijayanagar* type. The upper right hand holds the usual goad, and the upper left holds the usual noose. The lower right hand has a broken tusk with which he wrote the *Mahabharata.* The lower left hand carries the *modaka* (rice ball inlaid with sweet jaggery paste). The trunk is *valamburi,* while usually it is *idamburi.*

Sl.No. 31. GANESA

Acc. No. 1652 / 85; Ht. 23 cm.; Br. 16 cm.;

Provenance : *PERUMBALUR*, UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

It is similar to Acc. No. 1339/85 except that it is more stylised as it is of a later period. The trunk is *idamburi* and taking the *modaka* from the left lower hand.

Sl.No. 32. GANESA

Acc. No.47-5/36; Ht. 42 cm.; Br. 20 cm.

Provenance : *KODIAKKADU*, VEDARANYAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The *Ganesa* is portrayed as standing on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*, which is provided with rampant lions on either side on top of which projects, a metal rod on both sides. The left one is intact but the right one is broken and missing. The hands carry axe, noose, tusk and cake. He wears an ornate *karanda makuta*, necklaces, *udarabandha*, armlets, bracelets, *padasaras* and *katisutra* with tassels. He has an elephant's head with a single tusk. The trunk is *valampuri* and rests on the belly.

Sl.No. 33. GANESA

Acc. No. 288; Ht. 36 cm.; Br. 16 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The image wears a low *karanda makuta* and a sacred thread, which is divided in two below the breasts and again closes above the waistband, which is incomplete behind. The left fork of the waist band division passes beneath the band to end under the girdle. The right fork passes over the band and around below the stomach to unite with the right hand end of waist band and then as usual with the uppermost branch of sacred thread and onto the left shoulder. It is a well-finished image in rather heavy style but somewhat less ornate. He has the goad and noose in the upper hands while the lower hands have the broken tusk and *modaka* (rice ball).

Sl.No. 32
GANESA

Sl.No. 33
GANESA

Sl.No. 34
GANESA

Sl.No. 34. GANESA

Acc. No. 585/66; Ht. 42 cm.; Br. 24 cm.;

Provenance : *UDAYAVARKOILPATTU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Standing on a round *padma peetah* on a square *bhadra peetah,* he has the noose and the goad in the left and right upper hands respectively. In the lower right hand he holds the broken tusk with which he wrote the *Mahabharata.* He carries a sweet rice ball (*modaka*) in his lower left hand. The trunk is touching the *modaka,* as if he is going to take it to the mouth for eating.

The image stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah.*

Sl.No. 35. GANESA

Acc.No. 291; Ht. 66 cm.; Br. 38 cm.;

Provenance : SOUTH INDIA;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The Dancing *Ganesa* has a *Karanada makuta* on his head. The sacred thread divides into three, the middle portion tied below the waist band, one end having the form of a small cobra head and the other is the tail of the cobra. The rice cake is replaced by a fruit shaped like a mango which he carries in his lower left hand.

The provenance is from Gravely and Ramachandran, 1932. We have no further information.

Sl.No. 36. GANESA

Acc. No.133/50; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *MARIYUR,* ARANTHANGI TK., PUDUKKOTTAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

He stands on a circular *padma peetah* over a square *bhadra peetah* which has on either side hollow stumps to receive the *prabhavali.* The figure is quite massive. The head has a *karanda makuta.* The hair do has *siraschakra.* It has a lot of curls which bulge out at the base like terraces. This is at the back.

Sl.No. 37. GANESA

Acc. No. 286; Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 28 cm.;

Provenance : *VELANKANNI*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This deity wears a *Karanda makuta*. The sacred thread is divided into two; both parts passing towards the right, the upper one not reaching the waistband, only the lower continues around the body. The *makuta*, necklaces and general style of this image suggest that it is of *Chola* type, though the bows of the girdle are slightly unusual. The upper right hand holds an axe instead of the usual goad, and the upper left holds a rosary instead of the usual noose.

Sl.No. 38. GANESA

Acc. No. 287; Ht. 37 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *SETTIPULAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The deity wears a *karanda makuta*. The sacred thread is divided in two, both passing towards the right, but the upper one does not reach the waistband, only the other continues around the body. This image is not very well executed and has necklaces in higher but cruder relief. The upper hands hold the usual goad and noose, the latter broken. A fruit, shaped like a mango, though no doubt intended to be a wood apple, replaces the rice cake.

Sl.No. 39. GANGADHARA

Acc.No. 225; Ht. 21 cm.; Br. 11 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

A trident is held by both the upper arms across the back. The lower right and left ones are in *abhaya* and *varada mudras* respectively. A crude image with *makara kundalas* in both ears. *Ganga* is not shown. Both the upper right and left hands hold the trident at the back. The figure is depicted standing in *dvibhanga* on a lotus pedestal.

Sl.No. 35

Sl.No. 36

Sl.No. 37

GANESA

Sl.No. 38

Sl.No. 39
GANGADHARA

Sl.No. 40
KALI

Sl.No. 41
KALI

Sl.No. 40. ***KALI***

Acc. No. 1424/87; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 25 cm.;

Provenance : *PUDUKKOTTAI*, PUDUKKOTTAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Her hair is flame-like on the outer edge. Her upper arms look as if they hold some weapons. The lower left hand holds a skull-cup while the lower right carries a weapon, *trisul*. The earrings are like *patra kundalas*. The breasts are depicted with a *kuchabandha*. The lower garment has designs. She sits on a lotus pedestal fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. There are metal projections indicating that it is meant for being carried in a procession.

Sl.No. 41. ***KALI***

Acc. No. 1543 / 89; Ht. 35 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

She stands on a lotus pedestal fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. She carries a snake and a drum in her upper arms. In the lower right arm she carries a *sulam*, while the lower left has a skull cup. She wears *ratna kundalas*, a necklace, *skandhamala*, *kankanas* and lower garment. The features are somewhat crude and rigid making us date it to circa 17th Century AD.

Sl.No. 42. ***KALI***

Acc. No. 280; Ht. 29 cm.; Br. 29 cm.;

Provenance : *SENNIYANVIDUTHI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The general treatment of this image especially of the bows of the girdle seems to indicate that is of *Chola* type. The hair is flame like with crow pea, crescent and *datura* flower on the right and skull on the centre with a snake on either side of it. The upper pair of arms hold the trident and a snake held as a noose. The lower pair sports a skull cup and *abhaya*. A snake is found wound around each breast. The sacred thread composed of skulls is undivided. Girdle but not the cloth projects at the sides. The pedestal, which is rectangular is inscribed. The inscription, most of which is

unfortunately illegible is in Tamil characters of the early *Chola* period. In poise and pose it is very similar to *Maheswari* bronze (Acc. no. 668/70).

Sl.No. 43. KALI

Acc. No. 244/53 ; Ht. 36cm.; Br. 16 cm.;

Provenance : *THAMBIKKOTTAI VADAKADU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

Kali stands erect on the two *peetahs*. The *bhadra peetah* has two spikes. She wears an elaborately worked and frilled hair-do, with a crecent in it, *simhakundalas*, necklaces, serpents on the breastband, *kapalamala*, *channavira*, minutely worked lower garment, *valayas* and *padasaras*. The upper right hand holds a lotus and the upper left a *pasa*; the lower right hand a *khadga* and left a *kapala*.

Sl.No. 44. KALI

Acc. No. 314/55; Ht. 47 cm.; Br. 26.7 cm. ;

Provenance : *SHOLAMPATTI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Kali, called *Mariamman* in the Collector's Report, is seated on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. She wears *karanda makuta* with hair shown as flames behind it. Behind the flames is a serpent whose five outspread heads of hood serve as a canopy for the deity. Four hands are seen, the upper right hand holds a *damaru* and the lower right a *sula*; the left upper is missing while the lower left carries a *kapala*. The deity is seated in *sukhasana* pose, wearing *kucha bandha*, *haaras* etc.

Sl.No. 45. KALI

Acc. No. 1323/85; Ht. 35 cm.; Br. 16 cm.

Provenance : *NADUKKAVERI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 19th Century AD.

The *Devi* is in folk style. The features are intact. It conforms to type.

Sl.No. 42
KALI

◀ Sl.No. 43

Sl.No. 44

KALI

Sl.No. 45

Sl.No. 46. KALYANASUNDARA

Acc.No. 224; Ht. with *prabha* 34 cm.; Br. 27.5 cm.

Provenance : UNKNOWN

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

The base is a lotus pedestal fitting into slots on *bhadra peetah* (rectangular stand) on which is fixed a *prabha*. *Vishnu* holds the emblems, discus and conch in his upper pair of hands; in the lower right hand he holds a vessel with a spout (*Kendi*) for pouring water as a token of giving *Meenakshi* away in marriage and the lower left hand is in *katyavalambita* (keeping the hand on the hip). *Meenakshi* is ready to be grasped by *Siva* and holds a blue water lily. *Siva* has the usual emblems in his upper arms, axe and antelope; the lower right is stretched out to grasp *Meenakshi's* hand and a lotus bud is found in the lower left.

Vishnu and *Siva* are practically alike except for their positions, emblems and headdresses, the *Vadagalai namam* (mark on the forehead in the shape of U) of the former and the third eye of the latter. *Meenakshi* has the sun and moon shaped ornaments commonly worn by brides on the hair-do, a small *kondai* (hair-bun) on the top of her head and the back of her hair is worn in a long plait.

Sl.No. 47. KANKALAMURTI

Acc. No. 241 ; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUKKALLAR*, MANNARGUDI TK, TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The general treatment, especially the necklaces and ornamental loincloth, suggests affinity with the images of *Chola* type. On the other hand the emblems borne in the hair, though small, are in very high relief for their size, and the immense floral fastening of the sash is very unusual. There are no projecting elbow ornaments, though all four arms are separate almost from the shoulders. The back right hand is offering something to the antelope, which has risen on its hind legs to reach it. The back left hand is missing.

Sl.No. 48. KANNAPPA NAYANAR

Acc. No. 338; Ht. 78 cm.; Br. 24 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

His hair is tied in a *kesa bandha* with a band over it in the middle and a wheel shaped ornament on either side in front. No earrings are seen. All necklaces are short and uniform. The lowest one is with a circular pendant. A quiver full of arrows is on the left shoulder, attached to a band passing around the left side of the waist, i.e. like a sacred thread but crossing the body in the opposite direction; a bow hangs from the left shoulder; a sheathed dagger is hanging on the right side of the pleated belt worn by him in front of the right leg. A lower inner garment is shown below the belt reaching nearly to the knees. A garment of feathers is worn above this inner garment. The inner garment is depicted as a thin filament, which shows the skill of the *Stapathi*.

Sl.No. 49. MAHESWARI

Acc. No. 451/61; Ht. 64 cm.; Br. 43 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUKKODIKKAVAL*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The four-handed Goddess is seated on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*, the left leg is bent and rests on the pedestal. The right leg hangs down. The *Devi* wears a *jata makuta* onto the right of which is a *sasikala* (crescent moon) and on the left is a flower and snake and in the centre is a small *siraschakra;* she wears *patra kundalas* on the right ear and *makara kundalas* on the left ear. In the place of the *tilaka* (vermilion mark in the centre of the forehead) a third eye is seen. The nose is sharp and the face is well presented. The upper pair of arms holds a *trisula* and *pasa*, the lower right is in *abhaya* and the left holds a cup. A snake forms the *kucha bandha* (breast band). *Upavita* (sacred thread) is present. Two square holes are present on the *peetah* to receive the *prabha*, which was not recovered when the collection was made.

Sl.No. 46
KALYANASUNDARA

Sl.No. 47
KANKALAMURTI

Sl.No. 48
KANNAPPA NAYANAR

Sl.No. 49
MAHESWARI

Sl.No. 50
MAHESWARI

Sl.No. 50. *MAHESWARI*

Acc. No. 668/70; Ht. 50 cm. ; Br. 40 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVENGADU*, SIRKALI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The figure of *kali* is depicted in seated at ease pose on a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. She has four hands, the upper right and left hands carry a trident and goad respectively. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra* whereas the left hand carries a skull cup, her hair is designed in the shape of flames. Two cobras and a crescent moon decorate her hair-do. She wears a broad necklace, *yagnopavita* with skulls and lower garment. She has *keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras*. The crescent moon shown on the right side of her hair-do indicates her association with *Siva*. On this score we may identify this figure as *Maheswari* also. The oval face, the head band and features of this bronze adequately exhibit the *Chola* idiom.

Sl.No. 51. *MAHISHASURAMARDINI*

Acc. No. 273; Ht. with *prabha* 75 cm.; Br. 62 cm.;

Provenance : *TURAIKKADU*, TIRUTTURAIPPUNDI TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The figure has flame-like hair, with a crescent on the right side of the head and a pair of snakes one on either side of the skull found on the head. The upper arms are in *kataka mudra* (for trident) and holding a cobra; of the next set of arms, one is broken (which would have held a sword) and the other holds a shield; the next arm holds a bow, which is broken and a bell; the lower most pair of arms holds a dagger and a skull-cup. The third eye is depicted. The right earring has a human form; the left is a *patra kundala* with some object in the centre that we cannot identify. A snake coils around the breasts like a *kuchabandha*. The breasts are exaggerated. There is an *udarabandha* with the sacred thread in addition. The girdle projects. The pedestal is plain with *Mahishasura* below in front of it. The image portrays considerable vigour. It reminds us of the famous broken *Nisumabhasudani* sculpture described by K.A.Nilakanta Sastri (1935, page 110) This is an early *Chola* image.

Sl.No. 52. MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Acc. No. 341; Ht. 57 cm.; Br. 24.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KILAPUDANUR*, NANNILAM TALUK, TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

He has a wide circular *kesabandha* at the back of his head, which is flattened behind. Two necklaces of *rudraksha* (*Elaeocarpus sphaericus*) beads and a waistband are seen, the lower necklace hanging low between the breasts. He wears a loin cloth. The ends of the loin cord (*katisutra*) hangs on the left thigh. There is a bracelet on each wrist and a band immediately above each elbow with a small pendant tag on the outer side. The rosary is twisted around the right arm just above this, with a knot on the outer side to reduce its diameter to that of the arm and thus hold it tight.

Sl.No. 53. MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Acc. No. 339; Ht. 41 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *KURICHI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

His hair is curled. He wears a *yagnopavita*. He wears a loin cloth. He keeps his right hand in *chin mudra*. He holds the palm leaf manuscript of his work, *Tiruvachagam* in the palm of his left hand.

Sl.No. 54. MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Acc. No. 340; Ht. 47 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *VADAKKUPUYYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

His hair is curled. He wears a *yagnopavita*. He wears a loin cloth. He keeps his right hand in *chin mudra*. He holds the palm leaf manuscript of his work, *Tiruvachagam* in the palm of his left hand.

Sl.No. 55. MANIKKAVACHAKAR

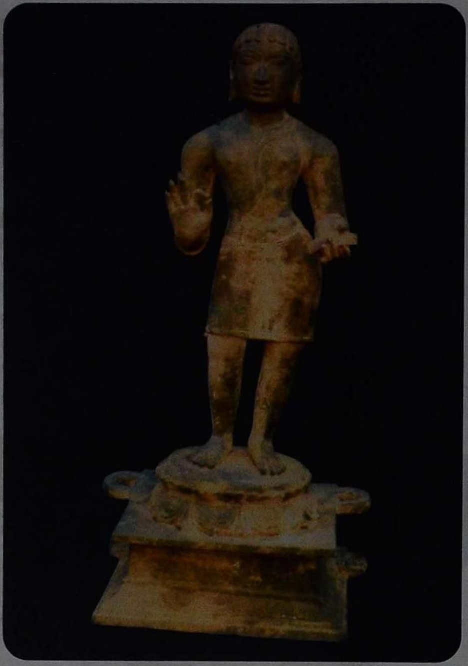
Acc. No. 342; Ht. 59 cm.; Br. 24 cm.;

Provenance : *SETTIPULAM*, TIRUTTURAIPOONDI TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The figure is pleasing with the *kesabandha* in circular form at the back of the head.

Sl.No. 51
MAHISHASURAMARDINI



Sl.No. 52

Sl.No. 53

Sl.No. 54

MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Sl.No. 55

There are two necklaces, the lower necklace being of *rudraksha* beads. It hangs between the breasts. The lower garment is tied between the legs but not around them. A string is tied in front of the right leg.

Sl.No. 56. NANDI

Acc. No. 326; Ht. 17.5 cm.; Br.15 cm;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This is a therianthropomorphic presentation of a God. *Jata makuta* with a crescent on right side and something unrecognisable on the left is depicted. Two pairs of arms are present with the upper ones holding the axe and antelope. The palms of both lower hands are up-turned to bear *Siva*'s feet. He has a Siraschakra on the back of the hair-do.

Sl.No. 57. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 234; Ht. 111 cm.; Br. 103 cm.;

Provenance : *VELANKANNI*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

The feather headdress is compressed into *makuta* form. The cobra and crescent are clearly shown on its surface on the right and left respectively, but are neither large nor in strikingly high relief. Below them are flowers that on the left are probably intended for the double *datura* or possibly of a lotus, and the very different flower on the right perhaps for the pendulous *Cassia fistula*. The skull is not very distinct and it is possible that a jewel was intended to be placed instead. The lotuses in the whirling locks are large and decorative. The *Ganga* is absent. There are three heavily embossed necklaces, the uppermost plain, and the next broad with pendants throughout and an ornamented centre. The third hangs from beneath them to a little above the waistband. The girdle seems to consist of four separate bands rather than of a single band with lines of decoration. The second band from the top bears a few rather heavily embossed flower ornaments, alternately large and small. The loincloth is without decoration. The drum is held between the second finger and thumb. The demon's hair lies close to his head instead of being raised. This beautiful bronze exhibits imperial elegance.

Sl.No. 58. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 752/75; Ht. 115 cm.; Br. 77 cm.;

Provenance : *KUNNIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

Dancing the *anandatandava* on an oval *padma peetah*, over another *padma peetah*, which in turn is on a rectangular *bhadra peetah*. The upper right hand carries the drum but the left is without *Agni*. One of the fingers each in the right hand and left are broken. He wears a small *jata makuta*, which has the usual crescent moon, flower, skull etc. The third eye is prominent. The left ear has a *patra kundala* while the right has none. The *skandha-mala* is present in the right shoulder whereas it is absent in the left shoulder. He wears the usual ornaments etc. The ends of the *udarabandha* are broken. On the right wrist, the usual serpent is seen but without the hood. The lower right hand is in *abhaya* while the lower left hand is in *gaja hasta*. The fifth finger in the right lower hand is broken. There are very simple bangles. The *prabha* has 21 flames and is well preserved. On the left side of the *prabha* the end of the lower garment is sticking while the rest of the portion is missing. There are no *jatas*, which usually adorn the headdress. The *apasmara* at the foot is parallel to the pedestal and his headdress looks like a flat one. The serpent in his left hand with its noose is fine and in the usual posture. *Siraschakra* of *Nataraja* is damaged. The image requires chemical treatment.

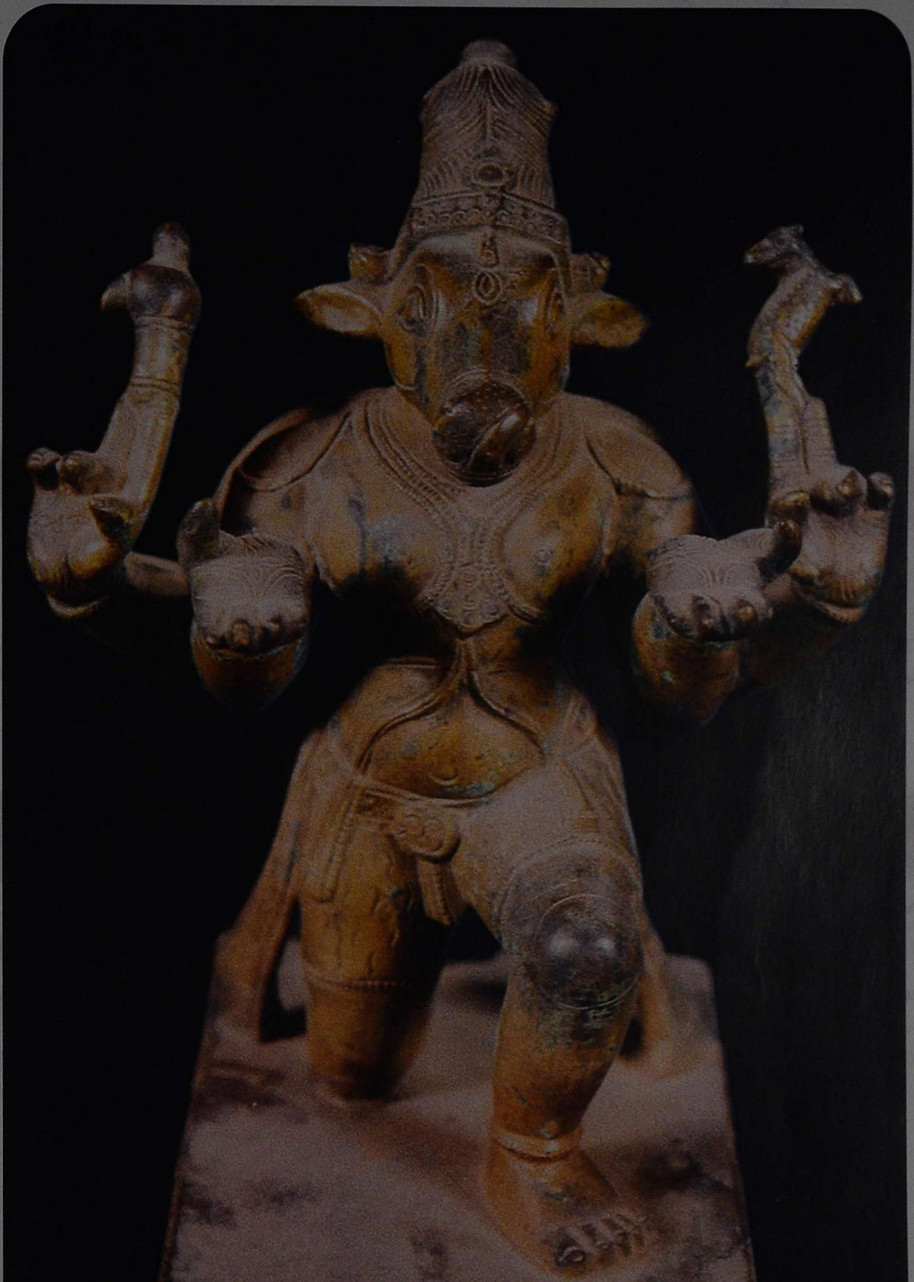
Sl.No. 59. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 653/70; Ht. 113 cm.; Br. 97 cm.;

Provenance : *KOTTANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Nataraja is in the usual *tandava* posture. He holds a drum and *Agni* in the upper hands, while the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *gaja hasta mudras*. He has the third eye, wears *patra kundalas*, crescent moon, skull, flowers, *Ganga* on his right locks, snake with single hood on the left side and an elaborately decorated *prabha*. *Muyalaka* is seen at his foot.



Sl.No. 56
NANDI

Sl.No. 57
NATARAJA

Sl.No. 58
NATARAJA

Sl.No. 60. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 40/36; Ht. 115 cm.; Br. 76 cm.;

Provenance : *MELAPERUMBALLAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This figure of *Nataraja* is with *prabha*. The upper hands have *Damaru* (kettledrum), flames issuing out of a cup, which is shaped like a lotus bud and held between the forefinger and thumb. The lower pair of hands is held in *abhaya* and *kari hasta mudras*. *Jatas* are found at the back. *Bhringipada* (foot ornament) is present in the right leg. *Muyalaka* is trampled on his back. There are two *ganas* near either side of the *prabha*. The *gana* on the right side plays on the *bhandavadya* (playing on pot drum,-*Kudamuzha* in Tamil). The *gana* on the left sounds cymbals. A bit of the flame of the ornamental *prabha* is broken and separate. There is a cut on the left thigh.

Sl.No. 61. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 1039/ 81; Ht. 114cm.; Br. 110 cm.;

Provenance : *JAMBAVANODAI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This figure dances on the *apasmara* lying over a *padma peetah* on a rectangular plate. The *prabha* has 53 flames and three are missing. The *prabha* issues from the mouth of a *makara* . The centre of the *prabha* has an ornamental gem like thing. The peacock feather headdress in which a goblin and a hooded snake and crescent moon are found is shown. The ends of the *jatas* are in ringlet form. The figure holds the usual emblems. Through rows of necklaces, a long *haara* of *rudraksha* is seen.

Sl.No. 62. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 632/68; Ht. 106 cm.; Br. 87 cm.;

Provenance : *MADUKKUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa about 12th Century AD.

The image is a *Nataraja* icon of the *Anandatandava* variety. The image has four hands depicted in the conventional style. *Nataraja* dances on the *Apasmara* . There are five *jatas* connected with flames. *Makara kundala* on his right side and *patra kundala* on his left side are seen. A snake on the left side parallels the *Ganga*

mermaid on the right side of the locks. The serpent in the upper right forearm is broken. But in the record, it is stated as if it is in the lower right forearm.

Sl.No. 63. NATARAJA

Acc. No. 236; Ht. 115 cm.; Br. 90 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU,* TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

This *Nataraja* dances on the *apasmara* on an oval shaped *padma peetah*. *Nataraja* has a headdress made of feathers. A skull appears in the middle of the lower part of the headdress. A snake on the right side of the headdress among the feathers and a crescent moon on the left side are seen. A *Datura* flower is seen on the right side of the headdress and another flower near the crescent. The upper right hand holds the drum, and the left hand holds *Agni;* the lower right hand is in *abhaya* while the lower left hand is in *kari hasta mudra. Nataraja* is wearing a *makara kundala* in his left ear and a *patra kundala* in his right ear. He also wears shoulder tassels, *keyuras, kankanas, udarabandha. Bhringipada* is not found in this *Nataraja.*

The expression of the demon is striking. His head is finished well. He has a band across his head from ear to ear where the hair meets the forehead. He is seen holding a snake in his left hand. Though the *prabhavali* is missing, its stumps on the pedestal shows that it did exist. There is a three tongued flame on the right side of the pedestal. This *Nataraja* was admired in the 1920s by the world famous sculptor, *Rodin,* after whom there is a museum in Paris, France.

Sl.No. 64. NATESA

Acc. No. 238; Ht. 86 cm.; Br. 107cm.;

Provenance : *KANKODUTTAVANITHAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

With the exception of the skull, all the emblems in the headdress are shown in full three-dimensional form, the snake above and the flower below on the right and two flowers on the left with the crescent on their side. The flower on the right is clearly *Calotropis* and on the left *Datura,* double above and single below. There are lotuses (not in the round) behind the ears. The whirling locks are united by two transverse

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NATARAJA

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NATARAJA

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NATESA

rows of small lotus flowers that end in large blossoms and buds alternately. *Ganga* is shown on the right side of the *jata makuta* as a mermaid, with the lower part of the body in mermaid form. The feathers are surmounted by a lotus in low relief, the whole being supported behind by a rod, spirally ornamented, ending above in a *yali* head on the back of the *prabhā*. There are two necklaces, the front middle part of the lower one falling away from the upper one, though not very far and bearing a large central ornament and pendant, a small crescent or sickle shaped ornament being attached further to the right. The girdle consists of five separate ornamental bands of which the middle one is the broadest and the bottom one bears bells along its lower border. Each leg bears an anklet with a bell in front. The drum is held between the first finger and the thumb and next two fingers below, the little finger not touching it. The demon wears a band where his hair, which lies flat, meets the forehead, with a lotus in the middle of it and another at either end.

Sl.No. 65. NATESA

Acc. No. 92/48; Ht. 110 cm.; Br. 75 cm.;

Provenance : *PORUPPUMETTUPATTI*, MADURAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

Natesa in an altogether different posture usually seen in images found in the temples of the *Pandya* kings. He dances with the right leg lifted and the left on the demon. The demon is shown to be under great strain. The demon with curly hair, bracelets and other ornaments and with a serpent in his left hand is carved on a rectangular *peetah* (base) having a depression in it in the middle part. The *peetah* at its sides has two stumps supported by *yalis* (*yali* - a mythical animal) to receive the *prabha* etc, which is missing. The figure is adorned with *jata makuta*. Short locks are shown. The image has all the usual ornaments. *Yagnopavita* and *udarabandha* are seen. The bronze is datable to the 9th century AD., the closing period of the early historical *Pandya* Empire.

Sl.No. 66. NATESA

Acc. No. 240 ; Ht. 47 cm.; Br. 40 cm.;

Provenance : *OKKUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

Siva is depicted here as the lord of dancers. He dances upon the back of the

Muyalaka, who holds a cobra on a lotus pedestal. The importance of this figure is well explained by Thiru P.R.Srinivasan in his "Bronzes of South India". The crescent and the *Datura* are depicted in the round i.e. depicted three dimensionally and not as bas-relif, for the first time on the headdress of this figure. The skull on the forehead is very prominently depicted with crane feathers. The face is oval. But the forehead is long and broad. He wears two neck ornaments. *Patra kundala* on the right ear, *kankanas*, an upper garment, which flows in the air, *yagnopavita*, lower garment and *kinkini*. He holds the dress in his upper right hand and the fire vessel in the upper left hand. His lower right hand is shown in *abhaya mudra* and his lower left hand is depicted as *gajahasta*. The *prabha* which enriches the dancing figure of *Natesa* is in parabolic shape with 19 flames. Two cuts are seen on his right leg.

Sl.No. 67. NATESA

Acc. No. 514/65; Ht. 126 cm.; Br. 98 cm.

Provenance : *AVANAMPARITTIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

Natesa dances the *Anandatandava* on the reclining *apasmara* who holds a snake in his left arm. The image is on a rectangular *bhadra peetah* with four holes. The arch pours out from the mouth of gaping *makaras* (crocodiles) with floral tails.

The image is four handed, holding a drum in the upper right, as if holding a fire in the upper left, the lower right in *abhaya* and the left in *gaja hasta* (hand held in the pose of the trunk of an elephant). A simple undergarment is seen. There is no *kati sutra* (thread tied around the waist). *Udarabandha* is present. The *yagnopavita* is in three strands. The upper garment issuing from the contour of the left waist is extended to reach the arch. *Valayas* (Tamil, simple armlets), *patra kundalas* on the left ear, two necklaces, upper simple semicircular one and a lower larger one are seen. There are ten locks of hair on either side, which are connected by six bands of floral designs. A crescent over the forehead and circular designs on the *patta* (the base band below the crown) are similar and presumably later additions. The *jata* above has nine prongs with a circular *kapala* (skull) and *Datura* flowers. A mermaid figure, *Ganga* is noticed on the uppermost lock of hair on the right side. The lock of hair flowing backwards is not extended but rather restricted in length and is shown reaching only

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NATESA

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NATESA

up to the neck. A snake is seen on the left side on the uppermost lock of *hair* as a counter balance. A snake is seen below the elbow in the lower right arm. A circular *siraschakra* (hair clip on the back of hair plait) is present at the back. The little finger in the lower right arm and the uppermost lock of hair on the right side are broken.

Sl.No. 68. NATESA

Acc. No. 1425/87; Ht. 74 cms.; Br. 63 cm.;

Provenance : *KAKARAI*, UNDIVIDED TANJORE DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Natesa dances on *apasmara* on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. The upper right hand holds the drum, which is fixed to the *prabha*, the left hand holds *agni*; the lower right is in *abhaya* and its counterpart is in *kari hasta mudra*. There are thirty-six flames in the *prabhavali*, which is more or less circular in shape. *Makara kundalas, patra kundalas, siraschakra* and other ornaments are present. There are five *jatas* on each side. The *Ganga* is seen in the right side of the *jata*. The crescent moon is seen on the left of the *jata makuta*.

Sl.No. 69. NATESA

Acc. No. 53/38; Ht. 53 cm. Br. 29.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KURAM*, KANCHEEPURAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

The deity dances on the back of *apasmara* over a circular *peetah* on a rectangular *peetah*, which is broken. The *apasmara* faces us. *Natesa* has four hands holding *damaru, abhaya*, snake and *kari hasta* (Tamil for *gaja hasta* in Sanskrit) . The left leg is raised and bent in what is known technically as *urdhvajanu* posture. He wears various ornaments like *valayas, yagnopavita, udarabandha*, etc. The image may belong to the late *Pallava* period. The dance is also unique. The image is very special.

Sl.No. 70. NATESA

Acc. No. 232; Ht. 77 cm.; Br. 52 cm.;

Provenance : *PUNGANUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

This image is of late *Chola* type. Among the *Natesa* images known to scholars only

one from *Polonnaruwa*, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) shows a similarity to this bronze. Both these bronzes differ from most of the known bronzes in having a drum attached by a band to the back of the first finger instead of being held either in the hand or in between the fingers. The character of the face is almost undefinable. The simple waist band without either loop on the right or flowing end on the left are all characteristics that produce the impression stated above. The features of this icon are more or less closely paralleled in the other *Natesa* images.

A skull appears in the middle of the lower part of the headdress, a snake on the right above among the feathers and a crescent moon on the left of them. There are small lotus flowers among the whirling locks, above which rests a full length human figure of *Ganga* on the right, balanced by a group of lotuses on the left. There are anklets on both legs.

The demon, a daintily odd figure is well executed. His head is finished well and shows clearly the pair of canine teeth protruding from his upper jaw. He has a band across his head from ear to ear, where the hair meets the forehead.

Sl.No. 71. PARVATI

Acc. No. 1783/94; Ht. 43 cm.; Br. 17 cm.;

Provenance : *PAVATTAKKUDI*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

She is depicted standing in *tribhanga* pose on a *padma peetah* fixed on a square pedestal. The right arm is depicted as if meant to hold a flower while the left is in *lola hasta*. *Makara kundalas* are worn by the deity. She wears a necklace, *keyura, yagnopavita,* a lower garment decorated with circular designs and *padasaras*. The head is in *karanda makuta*.

Sl.No. 72. PARVATI

Acc. No. 464/62; Ht. 53 cm.; Br. 20 cm.;

Provenance : *KURICHI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This piece is similar to Acc. No.1783/94 but of a later period. There is no base.

Sl.No. 70
NATESA

▲ Sl.No. 71

PARVATI

▲ Sl.No. 72

◀ Sl.No. 73

Sl.No. 73. PARVATI

Acc. No. 504/65; Ht. 27 cm.; Br. 18.5 cm.;

Provenance : *OLAYAKKUNNAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

This piece is different in style from the other *Parvati* pieces described above. She is depicted in seated pose on a round pedestal. She carries a goad and noose in her upper arms. The right lower arm is in *abhaya mudra* while the lower left is in *varada mudra*. She wears a conical *makuta, channavira,* row of *valayas* and lower garment. The *prabha* at the back is designed with pearl festoons and flame designs. The bronze in all its features expresses clearly a Kerala style though found in Thanjavur district.

Sl.No. 74. PARVATI

Acc.No.410/58, Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *ALATTUR*, ERSTWHILE SOUTH ARCOT DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Parvati is standing on a *padma peetah* over a rectangular *bhadra peetah* in the *tribhanga* pose. She wears *kesabandha* in the form of a *karanda makuta,* decorated with jewels. She wears *makara kundalas,* shoulder tassels, necklaces, *yagnopavitā, keyuras,* bangles and *padasaras.* The sari is striped. Her right hand is in *kataka* pose and her left hand is *lola hasta.*

Sl.No. 75. PARVATI

Acc. No. 47-4/36; Ht. 94 cm.; Br. 32 cm;

Provenance : *KODIAKKADU*, VEDARANYAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

Parvati standing in *tribhanga* pose on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah.* The hands are in *kataka* and *lola hastas.* The image has a *karanda makuta* and *makara kundalas.* Traces of *trivali* are seen. The waist zone is elaborately worked with tassels hanging from the sides and the centre. Armlets, bracelets and *padasaras* are also depicted. Necklaces and *yagnopavita* are present.

Sl.No. 76. PARVATI

Acc. No. 127/50; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *MARIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

The image is of the usual type, but more slender. The bud held in her right hand is broken and missing. The *peetah* has no stumps.

Sl.No. 77. PARVATI

Acc. No. 462/61; Ht. 78 cm.; Br. 27 cm.;

Provenance : *PUDUKKUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Standing on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*, the left leg is firmly placed on the pedestal and the right is slightly bent; right arm is in *kataka* and the left in *lola mudra;* wears *jata makuta.*

Sl.No. 78. PARVATI

Acc. No. 249; Ht. 64 cm.; Br. 22 cm.;

Provenance : *OKKUR*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

Of the two hands, one is in *kataka mudra* and the other hangs casually. *Kesa bandha* and *makara kundalas* are seen. The threads on the body extend around both the sides as in *Sridevi* but with the two parts crossed behind instead of being united. The girdle and the cloth do not project at the sides. This is clearly an image of the *Chola* type and shows the projecting elbow ornaments prominently. In the treatment of necklaces and other features, it closely resembles the *Sita* bronzes associated with *Rama*.

Sl.No. 79. PARVATI WITH ATTENDANT

Acc.No. 720/73; Ht. 90 cm.; Br. 42.5 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVENGIMALAI*, UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

Standing on a *padma peetah* over a rectangular *bhadra peetah* having two spokes one in each end. The image is slightly bent towards the left while having the left foot firm on

PARVATI

Sl.No. 74

Sl.No. 75

Sl.No. 76

▲
Sl.No. 77
PARVATI

▲
Sl.No. 78
PARVATI

◀ Sl.No.79
PARVATI WITH ATTENDANT

the ground. She wears a *karanda makuta* and *haaras*, the lowest one meets in between the breasts and branches off into two strands in addition to having one central band. The two strands go down and join at the back. This is somewhat similar to *Svarnavaikakshya* worn by *Parvati* of *Okkur*. She wears a *kantti*, a beautifully ornamented *Siraschakra* of the concave type and ten plaits of hair just below the *siraschakra*. *Skandhamala* is present only in the right side. The right hand is in *kataka* while the left one rests on the head of a woman carrying a casket. Her head reaches to about half way between *Parvati's* knees and hips. The ends of *the katisutra* have a knot at the right side and extend downward. *Kirti mukha* is absent. This image is very ornate and can be dated to 10th to 11th centuries AD.

Sl.No. 80. PRADOSHAMURTI

Acc.No. 210; Ht. with *prabha* 47 cm.; Br. 32 cm.;

Provenance : *PANAGATTANGUDI*, NANNILAM TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

This is also a *Chola* image. *Siva* has the axe and antelope in the upper arms, the lower right is in *abhaya mudra* and the left is around *Parvati*'s shoulders. *Parvati*'s righ- hand is in the *kataka mudra* and the left hangs down (*lola hasta*) freely. There is a crescent to the right on the headdress (on the *jata makuta*). The tail and right cheek of the antelope are turned towards *Siva*. *Parvati* wears the projecting elbow ornaments often found in this class of image.

Sl.No. 81. PRADOSHAMURTI

Acc.No. 1649/85; Ht. 28.5 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *PERAMBALUR*, PERAMBALUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This is a *Nayak* period image. *Siva* has the axe and antelope in the upper arms, the lower right is in *abhaya mudra* and the left is in *varada mudra*. On the *jata makuta*, the crescent is shown on the left side. *Parvati* is shown on his left side standing in *tribhanga* pose. *Parvati*'s right hand carries a lotus and the left hangs down (*lola hasta*) freely. *Parvati* wears the projecting elbow ornaments often found in this class of image.

Sl.No. 82. SAGE

Acc. No. 78-9/43; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *SEMANGALAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

A devotee stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. His hands are in *anjali* pose. He wears a top knot and garment which extends upto the knee. He has a beard and armlet on the right arm.

Sl.No. 83. SIVAKAMASUNDARI

Acc. No. 515/65; Ht. 91.5 cm.; Br. 32 cm.;

Provenance : *AVANAMPARITTIYUR,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The deity stands in *tribhanga* on a circular *padma peetah* over a square *bhadra peetah*. She has *a karanda makuta, skandha mala* (shoulder tassels), *yagnopavita, valayas,* armlets, *makara kundalas, padasaras* and two simple semicircular necklaces. A full and flowing lower garment is worn. The *kati sutra* has four bands with side loops and a semicircular loop in the front. She wears *mekhalas* (hip ornament usually worn by women). There is a slight protuberance of the knees. Three flowing lines above the circular and sunken navel suggest feminity. The right hand is in *kataka* and left in *lola*. *Siraschakra* is present and seems to be detachable.

Sl.No. 84. SIVAKAMASUNDARI

Acc. No. 1044/81; Ht. 82 cm.; Br.26 cm.;

Provenance : *JAMBAVANODAI,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Sivakamasundari is in the usual style with her right hand in *kataka mudra* and the left held as *lola hasta*. The lower garment has a lot of folds. Being a later period image, it is more stylised. Traces of *trivali* are seen.

Sl.No. 85. SIVAKAMASUNDARI

Acc. No. 1427/87; Ht. 54 cm.; Br. 20 cm.;

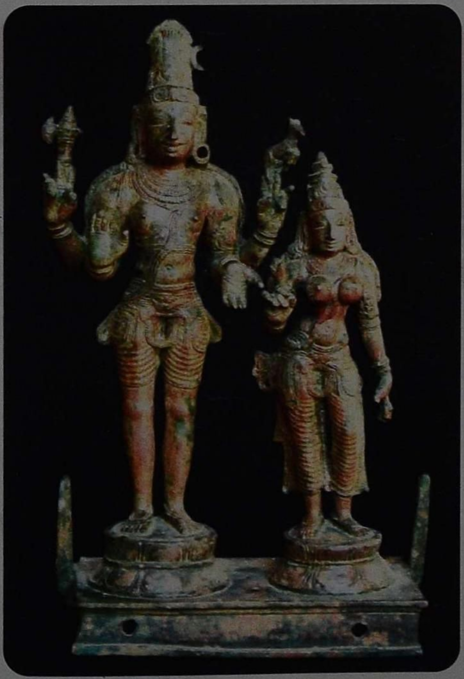
Provenance : *KAKKARAI,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th century AD.

Devi stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*, which has a hole in the front

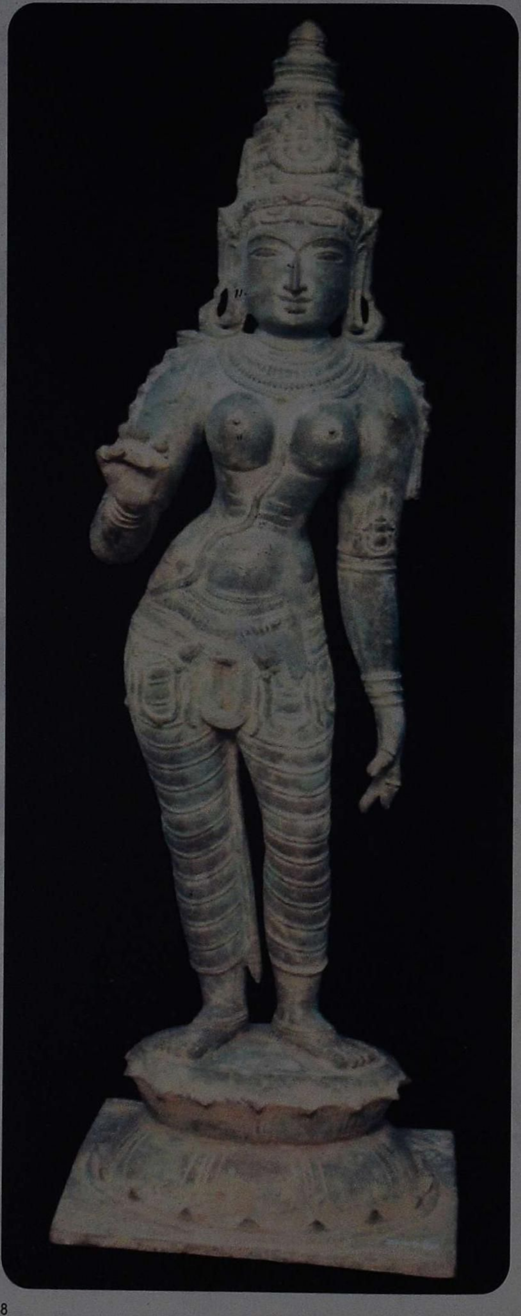
Sl.No. 80
PRADOSHAMURTI

Sl.No. 81
PRADOSHAMURTI



Sl.No.82
SAGE

Sl.No. 83
SIVAKAMASUNDARI



Sl.No. 84
SIVAKAMASUNDARI

Sl.No. 85
SIVAKAMASUNDARI

Sl.No.86
SIVAKAMI

Sl.No. 87
SOMASKANDA

Sl.No. 88
SOMASKANDA

and back to secure the idol. She wears *karanda makuta*, necklaces, *siraschakra* and *patra kundalas*. Her right hand is in *kataka mudra* and the left is in *lola hasta*. The left hand is broken into two parts (now joined). Traces of *trivali* (three folds of skin on the stomach in the narrow waist portion) are seen in *Parvati* genre bronzes.

Sl.No. 86. SIVAKAMI

Acc. No.1369/87; Ht. 63 cm.; Br. 27 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 18th Century AD.

This image of *Sivakami* has two hands and stands on a circular *padma peetah*, which in turn is on a *bhadra peetah*. The right hand holds a blue lily and the left hangs down. She is adorned with *karanda makuta, makara kundalas, skandhamala*, necklaces, *yagnopavita, kati sutra*, a bangle in each hand and a mark of *tilaka* on her forehead. She has a sharp nose and wears *siraschakra* and *nupuras*. The appearance of the fingers is pleasing. These features make us date it as late as the 18th century.

Sl.No. 87. SOMASKANDA

Acc. No. 220; Ht. 50 cm.; Br. 60 cm.;

Provenance : *NIDUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The treatment of this image especially the necklaces and faces clearly mark it as of *Chola* type inspite of the absence of the projecting elbow ornaments. *Siva* sports the axe and antelope in the upper arms and has the lower ones in *abhaya* and *ahuyavarada* respectively. The usual snake and a flower are present on right and left respectively of the jewel in *Siva's* headdress which lacks the usual crescent. The face and tail of the antelope point to *Siva*. *Subrahmanya* is shown as standing erect and wears a *karanda makuta* and *patra kundalas*. *Uma* is in *Rajaleelasana*. Her right hand is in *kataka* and left in *varada mudras* respectively. She wears a high decorated hair-do.

Sl.No. 88. SOMASKANDA

Acc.No. 14/32; Ht.47 cm.; Br. 59.5 cm.;

Provenance : *SORAKKUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

Siva is seen sitting with *Uma* on a *bhadra peetah* with a seat for *Skanda* between

them. The *Skanda* is now missing. In his hands he holds an axe and the antelope (which is missing). The lower pair of arms is in *abhaya* and *ahuya varada mudras.* The head shows *jata makuta* with the crescent moon on the left side. The right ear is empty while the left has a *patra kundala* on it. A three-stranded *yagnopavita* is seen. Two necklaces, one narrow and the other broad are seen. The waist girdle and loincloth extend up to the thighs with an ornamental sash surrounding the *kirti mukha. Keyuras* (shoulder ornament), *valayas* (bangles) and *padasaras* (anklets) are depicted. The right leg hangs down and rests on a plain base.

Uma sits to the left of *Siva* in the *utkutika* (raising a leg, with the other leg hanging down, right and left respectively in this case) while resting on a plain base. A *karanda makuta* is worn on the head. The hands are in the *kataka* and *varada* postures. Two necklaces, with one hanging low are present. A single stranded *yagnopavita, keyuras, valayas* and *padasaras* are seen.

Sl.No. 89. *SOMASKANDA*

Acc.No. 223; Ht. 27 cm; Br. 30 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU,* TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

This image is the smallest *Somaskanda* in the collection of the Government Museum, Chennai. *Siva* is seen sitting with *Uma* on a *bhadra peetah* with a slot between them for *Skanda. Skanda* was not found when the icon was collected. *Siva* is holding an axe and antelope in his upper pair of hands. The lower pair of hands is carrying a skull-cup and a trident. The head shows a *jata makuta* with the crescent moon at the top and the skull at the bottom with snakes in between. On the left side of the *jata makuta* snakes and a large *Datura* flower near the bottom are seen. *Siva* wears a *makara kundala* in his right ear and a deeply cylindrical *patra kundala* in his left ear. A three stranded *yagnopavita* is seen.

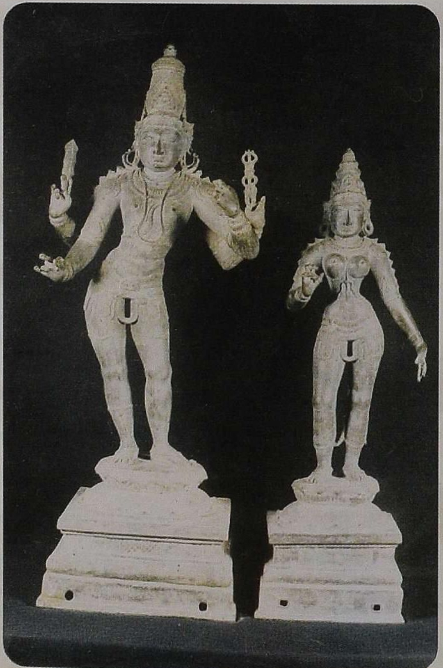
Uma sits to the left side of *Siva* with her left leg hanging down. *Uma* is wearing *patra kundalas* in her ears. Her hair is done up like a *karanda makuta.* The breasts are not exaggerated. She holds a lotus bud in her right hand and left hand is in *ahuyavarada* posture. *Uma's* hair falls in seven ringlets, of which the two outermost on each side are twisted into shoulder ornaments. The girdles of both *Siva* and *Uma* have ornamental bows on both sides. At the front of the stand between them are two

Sl.No. 89
SOMASKANDA

Sl.No. 90
SOMASKANDA

Sl.No. 91
SUBRAHMANYA

Sl.No. 92
SUBRAHMANYA WITH VALLI



circular depressions evidently intended to receive *Skanda's* feet. But as seen above the icon of *Skanda* was not recovered when the collection was made. The skull-cup and the trident clearly shows the influence of *Chalukyan* iconography. This bronze is unique because it represents a fusion of *Pallava* and *Chalukya* styles.

Sl.No. 90. SOMASKANDA

Acc.No. 1426/87; Ht. 45 cm. ; Br. 57 cm.;

Provenance : *KAKKARAI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

Siva is seated on a rectangular pedestal. Upper hands carry the axe and antelope. Lower hands are in *abhaya* and *simha karna* poses. The *jata makuta* is slightly elongated. The usual ornaments are present. The *Devi* is seated with hands in *kataka* and *varada* poses. Heavy encrustations are present. *Skanda* is a very nice figure but broken near the ankle and separated from the *peetah*.

Sl.No. 91. SUBRAHMANYA

Acc. No. 1432/87 Ht. 44 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The figure is depicted in standing pose on a lotus pedestal placed on a square pedestal. He has four hands. He holds *Sakthi ayudha* (the weapon given by his mother *Parvati*) in his upper right hand. The weapon in his upper left hand is broken and missing. The lower right and left hands are in *abhaya* and *varada mudras* respectively. He wears *karanda makuta*, a necklace, *skandhamala*, *udarabandha* and lower garment.

Sl.No. 92. SUBRAHMANYA WITH VALLI

Acc. Nos : 1041/81; 1042/81; Ht : 118cm.; Br.41.5cm.; Valli Ht.: 98cm.; Br. 31cm.;

Provenance : *JAMBAVANODAI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Subrahmanya and *Valli* stand on two separate *peetahs*. The *peetah* is a *padma peetah* on a *bhadra peetah*. He wears a *kirita makuta*, *makara kundalas* in his ears, necklace, *haara*, shoulder tassels, *udarabandha*, sacred thread and *valayas*. He holds the *sakhti ayudha* in his upper right

hand and *vajra ayudha* in his upper left hand. The lower left and right hands are in the pose of holding a bow and arrow respectively. *Valli* wears a *karanda makuta* on her head, *patra kundalas* in her ears, *channavira*, shoulder tassels, necklaces and *valayas*. The girdle is elaborately carved. The right hand is in *kataka mudra* while the left is in *lola hasta*.

Sl.No. 93. SUKHASANA

Acc. No. 199; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 32.5 cm.;

Provenance : UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The upper arms hold the axe and antelope and the lower ones are in *abhaya* and *simha karna* poses respectively. The snake and crescent are very small and inconspicuous on the right and left respectively of the upper part of headdress. *Makara kundala* (ear ornament in the shape of crocodile) in the right ear and *patra kundala* in the left are seen. Necklace and waistband with large and finely finished ornaments are seen in the middle in front. The sacred thread divides into two branches with a small ornamental knot above the left breast. The *mruga* (antelope) is held on his left hand. It is spotted. Its breast and the back of its head is turned towards *Siva*. Its feet rest on the tips of his fingers. The thumb is broken at the tip. The pedestal shown does not belong to the icon.

In the absence of the pedestal it is impossible to be sure that this figure did not really form part of an *Umasahita* or *Somaskanda* group.

Sl.No. 94. SULAM

Acc. No. 1325/85; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 19.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KALANJIMEDU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST, TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

It has a circular lotus base with a cylindrical stalk. The three branches of the *Sula* are symmetrical. This is a plain piece.

Sl.No. 95. SULAM

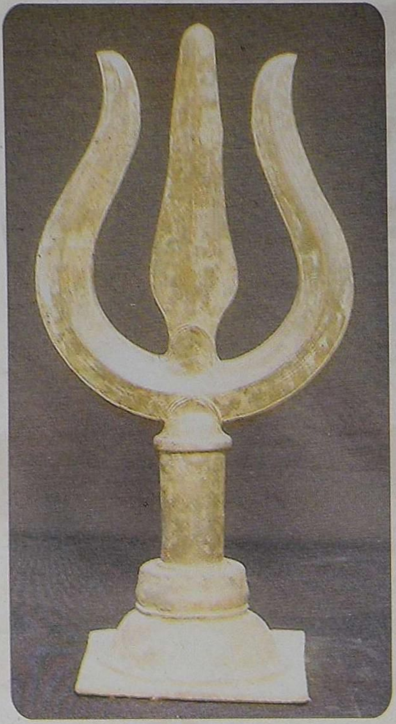
Acc. No. 1047/81; Ht. 60 cm.; Br. 37.5 cm.;

Provenance : *JAMBAVANODAI*, THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

It has a circular lotus base with a cylindrical stalk. Of the three branches of the

Sl.No. 93
SUKHASANA



SULAM

Sl.No. 94

Sl.No. 95

Sl.No. 96

Sl.No. 97

Sl.No. 98

Sula, the central is one like the *Sakthi ayudha (weapon* of *Subrahmanya).* The other two are curved like a circle. This is a plain piece.

Sl.No. 96. SULAM

Acc. No. 622/67; Ht. 64 cm.; Br. 35 cm.;

Provenance : *MUTTAM,* ERSTWHILE SOUTH ARCOT DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

It is similar to Acc. No. 1047/81 except that the three ends are joined at the top. The centre prong has a lotus half way up its length.

Sl.No. 97. SULAM

Acc. No. 246/53; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 31 cm.;

Provenance : *THAMBIKKOTTAI VADAKADU,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The trident has rosette and floral designs on it.

Sl.No. 98. SULAM

Acc. No. 350; Ht. 43 cm.; Br. 30 cm.

Provenance : *SENNIYANVIDUTHI,* PATTUKKOTTAI TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The outer branches arise from *makara* heads, with a lotus design embossed about half way up. The central branch has a somewhat different lotus design above and below, the latter with a small semicircular projection on either side. About halfway up is a somewhat larger pair of semicircular projections. It is plain behind. There is a figure of *Siva* with *Rishabha* (divine bull, *Nandi*) at his back. *Siva* carries his usual symbols, the axe and the antelope.

Sl.No. 99. SUNDARAMURTI

Acc. No. 349; Ht. 53 cm.; Br. 27 cm.;

Provenance : *THIRUVELANGADU,* TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

The hair is tied in an ornamented *kesa bandha.* Rings hang from the lobes of his ears. The right hand is raised to mark the pitch of his song and the left beats time.

Three necklaces are seen, the innermost of *rudraksha* beads hanging low between the breasts, crossing over the middle one and under the outermost, both of which have large central ornaments. The sacred thread is three-stranded and undivided. The *udarabandha* is in four bands. The upper broad band is decorated alternately with the design of wheels and diamonds.

Sl.No. 100. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No.299; Ht. 50 cm.; Br. 30 cm.;

Provenance : *ERAYANKUDI*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Though it is argued by some that the ornament *Channavira* on the torso of the bronzes re-labelled as *Tirujnanasambandar* would make them *Balasubrahmanya*, since this ornament is worn by *Kshatriyas* (the warrior class), it is not accepted by us. This is because though *Tirujnanasambandar* was a Brahmin (priestly class) child, because of Lord *Ṣiva's* grace he was exalted and could then afford such ornaments.

Tirujnanasambandar wears *todus* and dances with his right foot on a lotus pedestal. The upper border of the *kesa bandha* has the form of a projecting semicircular crest. The girdle is tied in front of the right leg. On the inner side of this is a bell attached by a long string and a corresponding bell on the opposite leg.

This image has been entered as *Balasubrahmanya* in the Accession Register.

However since the index finger is pointing at something which is the iconographic hallmark of *Tirujnanasambandar,* we re-identify it as that of the *saivite* boy saint.

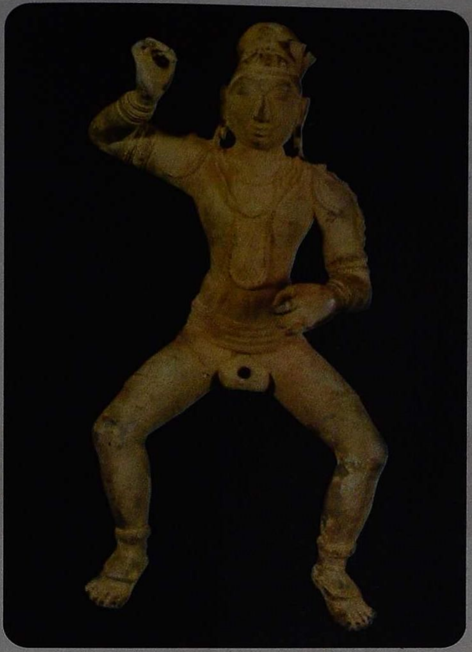
Sl.No. 101.TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No. 162/50; Ht. 47 cm.; Br. 29 cm.;

Provenance : *VELLALAGARAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Tirujnanasambandar dances on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He wears the hair as *kesa bandha* adorned with jewels. A *siraschakra* is seen at the back of the hair-do. The right hand is in *suchi mudra* while the left is in *gaja hasta*. He wears *patra kundalas, haaras,* girdle with bells attached and a prominent *patta* on the forehead.

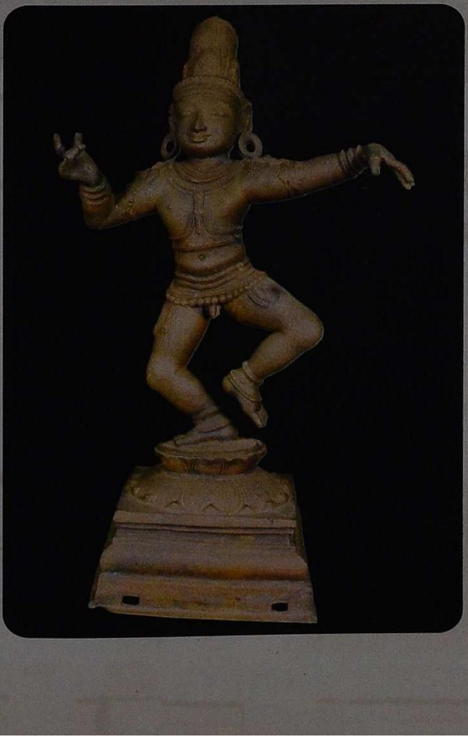


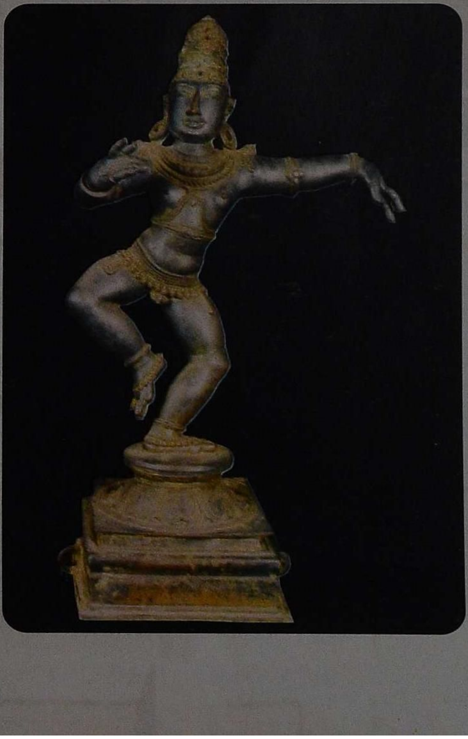
Sl.No. 99
SUNDARAMURTI

Sl.No. 100
TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Sl.No. 101
TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Sl.No. 102
TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR





Sl.No. 103

TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Sl.No. 104

Sl.No. 105

Sl.No. 106

This image has been entered as *Balasubrahmanya* in the Accession Register.

However since the index finger is pointing at something which is the iconographic hallmark of *Tirujnanasambandar,* we re-identify it as that of the *saivite* boy saint.

Sl.No. 102. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No.170/50; Ht. 47.5 cm.; Br. 28 cm.;

Provenance : *VELLALAGARAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Tirujnanasambandar dances on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He wears *jata makuta, patra kundalas, haaras, channavira, udarabandha, valayas,* a girdle of bells, anklets and *padasaras*. The hands and feet are in the usual posture. A *siraschakra* is seen on the back of the hair-do.

However since the index finger is pointing at something which is the iconographic hallmark of *Tirujnanasambandar,* we re-identify it as that of the *saivite* boy saint.

Sl.No. 103. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No. 1650 / 85; Ht. 36 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *PERUMBALUR,* UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The image wears *todus* and dances with the right foot on a lotus pedestal. The girdle is tied in front of the right leg. The headdress is arranged in *kesa bandha* with a chain of beads. He wears *ratna kundalas,* three necklaces, *channavira, kankanas, kati sutra* with bells and *padasaras*. This is entered as *Balasubrahmanya* in the Accession Register, but the index finger, which is raised and points at something is taken to mean that it is pointing to *Parvati* in the sky who fed the saint with milk. The child saint points this out when the father scolds him for drinking milk from strangers at the temple tank at *Sirkali,* Nagapattinam district.

Sl.No. 104. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No. 1052 / 81; Ht. 45 cm.; Br. 30 cm.;

Provenance : *JAMBAVANODAI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST.,TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

The iconography of this piece is similar to Acc. No. 1650/85 except that it is an earlier piece. The treatment of the headdress and the torso make us date it to the period circa 13th century AD. He stands on a round pedestal fixed in turn in a square pedestal as in the previous piece. This is also wrongly entered as *Balasubrahmanya* in the Accession Register, but we have properly identified it based on the pointing index finger. Though *channavira* is seen, it cannot be taken as an index to identify it as *balasubramanya*. The child saint though a *brahmin* is treated as the son of Lord *Siva*. Therefore *channavira* a princely symbol is worn by him.

Sl.No. 105. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No. 47-6/36; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 34 cm.;

Provenance : *KODIAKKADU*, VEDARANYAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

The iconography of this piece is similar to Acc. No. 1052/81 except that the lotus in the pedestal is prominently shown.

Sl.No. 106. TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

Acc. No. 344; Ht. 57 cm.; Br. 25 cm.;

Provenance : *VEMBAVUR*, PERAMBALUR TK, PERAMBALUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The hair is tied up as a knot on top of the head. The right hand has the forefinger pointing upwards, the left holds a cup. Two short necklaces are seen, the upper one being very slender. The lower one is broad and supporting, back and front. The two ends of each of a pair of threads, one passing round each side of the body, with a central tassel between them are seen. Two slender girdles are shown, the lower one being fringed with bells of the spherical type. It is tied in a small looped knot on either side, one end each of which bears a larger bell of the same type, as does a similar tassel in front of each leg. The image is naked except for armlets, etc. The

bronze is in the District Museum at Madurai.

Sl.No. 107. TRIPURANTAKA

Acc.No.450/61; Ht.100 cm.; Br. 52 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUKKODIKKAVAL*, KUMBAKONAM TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

Standing on a lotus pedestal in *dwibhanga* pose; wears a *jata makuta* the crescent moon on the right and *cassia* flower and snake on the left. His hair-do has a *siraschakra*. He wears ordinary elongated earrings. The third eye appears as a *tilaka* and the face is charming. Two *haraas* adorn the neck. *Upavita* and *udarabandha* are present. The *kati sutra* is fastened with the *kirti mukha* motif. The upper pair of arms bear *parasu* and *mruga*. The latter is broken and lost. The lower pair is in the pose of holding a bow and arrow. The right leg is firmly placed on the pedestal and the left is slightly bent. The hands wear *kankanas*, *keyuras* and *valayas*.

Sl.No. 108. TRIPURANTAKA

Acc. No. 231/53; Ht. 45 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *TRANQUEBAR*, TRANQUEBAR TK.,NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

He is standing in *tribhanga* pose on a *padma peetah* over a square plate. He wears a *jata makuta*. His ears are adorned with *makara* and *patra kundalas*. He has four hands. The *parasu* in the upper right hand is missing, the upper left hand holds the deer; the other two hands are in the posture of holding a bow and arrow. Necklaces, *yagnopavita*, *udarabandha*, girdle and *padasaras* have been depicted. The piece is worn out

Sl.No. 109. TRIPURASUNDARI

Acc. No. 232/53; Ht. 35 cm.; Br. 12.5 cm.;

Provenance : *TRANQUEBAR*, TRANQUEBAR TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

She stands in *tribhanga* pose on a *padma peetah*. She wears a *karanda makuta*, *makara kundalas*, *haaras*, *yagnopavita*, armlets and wristlets. The lower garment reaches to the ankle. On the garment are portrayed links suggesting folds as well as some floral designs. *Padasaras* are seen on the legs. She has two hands, the right is in *kataka* and the left is in *lola hasta*. The piece is worn out.

Sl.No. 110. UMASAHITA

Acc.No. 215; Ht. 43cm.; Br. 31 cm.;

Provenance : *SETTIPULAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

The treatment of this image, especially of the ends of *Siva's* girdle and the presence of projecting elbow ornaments not only in *Parvati* but even in the fork between the two elbows of each side of the four armed *Siva* clearly place this image as a later *Chola* image in spite of several marked differences in detail of necklaces, sacred thread and girdle. *Siva's* upper hands face outwards but their emblems have been broken off. The front hands sport *abhaya* and *varada mudras*. *Parvati* holds a lotus bud in her right hand. *Siva's* headdress bears a jewel in front. Above this it bears a cobra on the right of the jewel. All these emblems are in particularly high relief. *Parvati* wears a *karanda makuta*. *Siva's* right ear and *Parvati's* both ears bear *makara kundalas; Siva's* left ear bears a *patra kundala*. In both images the median loop of the girdle has the conventional parallel-sided form. In the *Siva* image there is above it a particularly large lion face ornament with large and widely opened mouth and the ends of the girdle project most elegantly at the sides. In the *Parvati* image there are neither lion face ornament nor projecting ends to the girdle, but the pleated end of the cloth projects backwards from the inner side of the left leg, which is covered to the ankle, the right one being covered only to the knee. *Siva's* legs are almost bare to the top, except that the left one bears an anklet at the level to which the ends of the girdle fall.

Sl.No. 111. UMASAHITA

Acc.No. 219; Ht. 48 cm.; Br. 35 cm. Ht. 37 cm.; Br. 30 cm.;

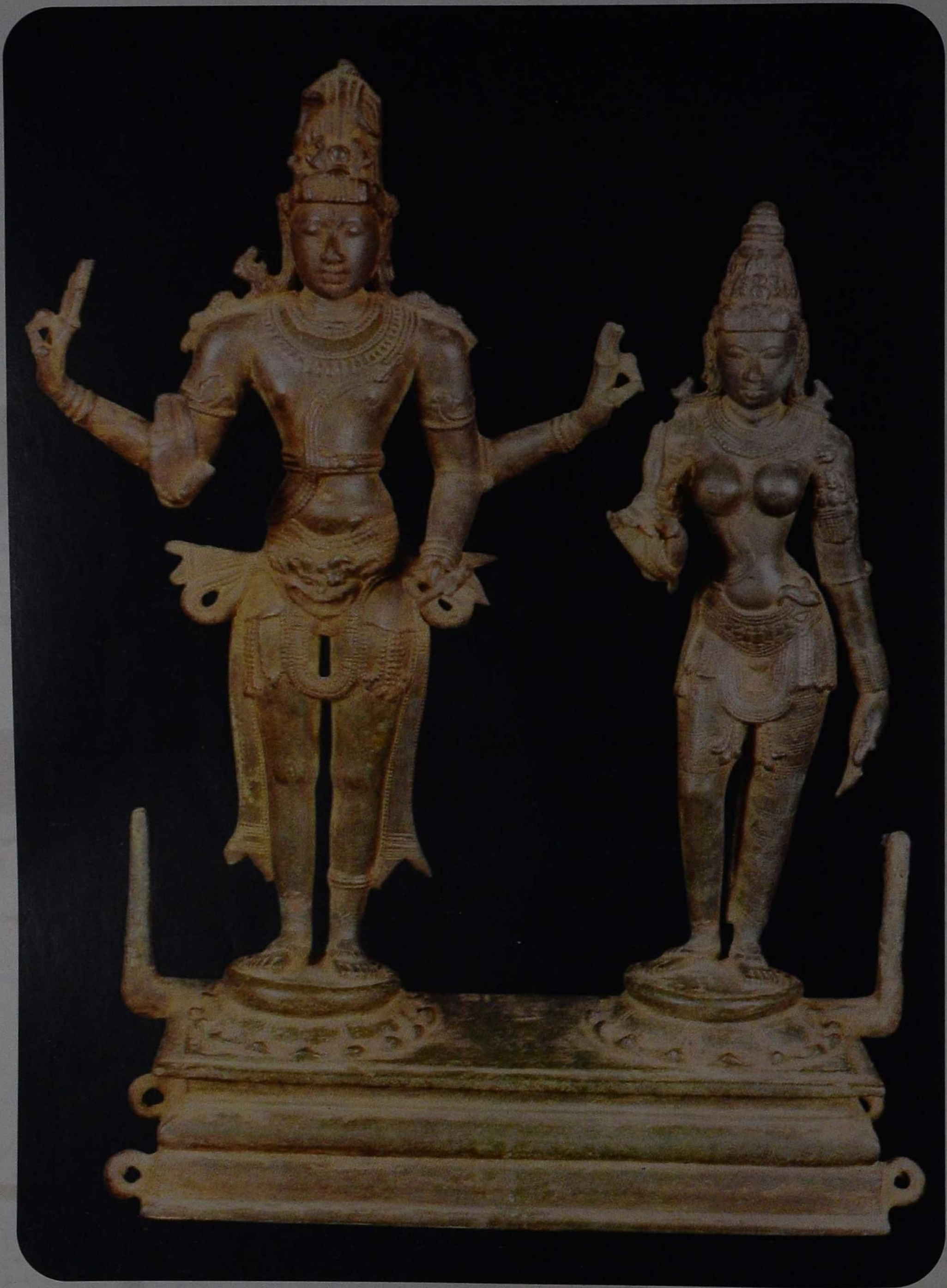
Provenance : *SIKKIL*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

Siva sports the axe and antelope in his upper pair of arms. The lower pair sports *abhaya* and *ahuyavarada mudras*. *Parvati's* arm holds a lotus and the other rests on the pedestal. Both images have *makara kundalas* in both ears. On either side of the jewel in *Siva's* headdress is a flower, that on the right apparently a double *datura* and that

Sl.No. 107
TRIPURANTAKA

Sl.No. 108 & 109
TRIPURANTAKA & TRIPURASUNDARI



Sl.No. 110
UMASAHITA

on the left a lotus with the usual cobra and crescent above them. The antelope's tail and face are turned towards *Siva*. Each figure wears two slender necklaces of simple pattern.

Sl.No. 112. UMASAHITA

Acc.No. 217; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 54 cm.;

Provenance : UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

Siva's hands hold the usual symbols, axe and antelope; *Parvati*'s right hand holds a lotus bud and the left is in *Ahuya varada*. The girdle and cloth, though somewhat crudely worked, are fully decorated; but as is usual in seated figures, they cannot compare with those of standing figures. That this image is of *Chola* type is, however, indicated by the general form of the necklaces, by *Parvati*'s projecting elbow ornaments (though these are not distinct), and by the treatment of the face.

A skull is represented in *Siva*'s headdress below the jewel, above which are two rather obscure objects, that on the right probably representing either a flower or a seated figure of *Ganga*, and that on the left probably a lotus or *datura* (*Datura fastuosa*) flower. The crescent moon above the latter is clearly shown but the cobra usually found on the right is not seen.

Siva's sacred thread is knotted in front to a thinner and shorter thread passing from the right shoulder around the left side of the body and crossing the sacred thread behind. *Parvati*'s clothes are of the *Sridevi* type. The breast and the back of the head of the antelope incline towards *Siva*.

Sl.No. 113. VEENADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI

Acc. No. 229; Ht. 66 Cm.; Br. 26 cm.;

Provenance : UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 12th Century AD.

This image has *Chola* type features. But the high relief of the ornamentation, especially the necklaces and the lion-faced clasp of the girdle prevent us from ascribing the image definitely to the *Chola* period. The upper pair of arms carries the axe and

antelope; both the lower arms are in *kataka mudra* to hold the Veena. The snake and the crescent are inconspicuously shown on the right and left respectively on the top of the headdress. The loincloth has a design of a single row of rather widely spaced wheels, with an additional pair, slightly larger and more conspicuous, at a higher level on the most prominent part of the buttocks. The breast and the back of the head of the antelope are towards *Siva*.

Sl.No. 114. VEERABHADRA

Acc. No. 246; Ht. 95 cm.; Br. 47 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, TIRUTTANI TK., TIRUVALLUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

The figure has four pairs of hands, all more or less broken, of which the second right evidently held a snake. There are *patra kundalas* in both ears. A long garland of skulls hangs from the left shoulder across the legs, ending on the right side in the girdle.

Sl.No. 115. VISHAPAHARANA

Acc. No. 226; Ht. 62 cm.; Br. 41 cm.

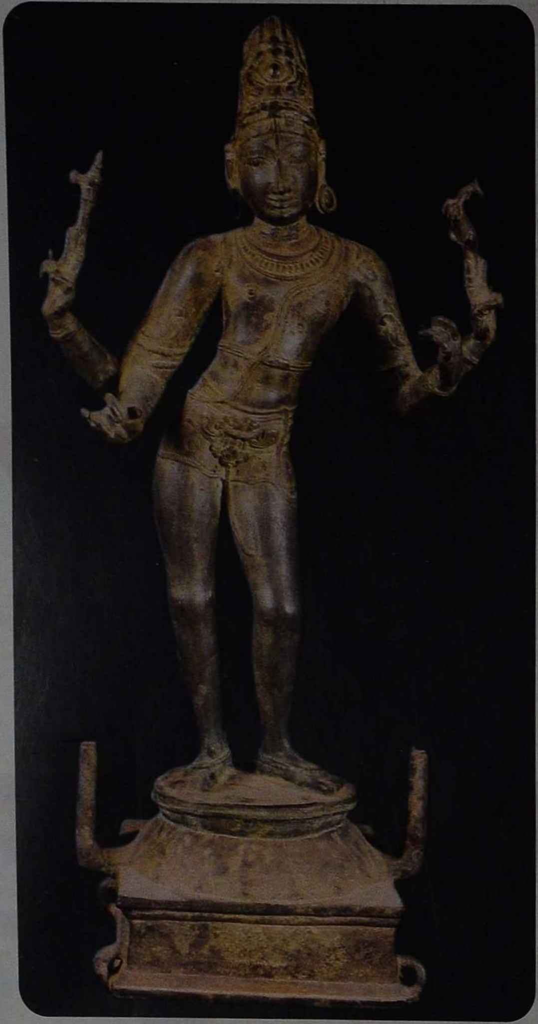
Provenance : *KILAPPADANUR*, NANNILAM TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

Siva has the axe and antelope in the upper arms. The lower ones carry the cobra and poison. The treatment of this image, especially the high relief of the details of the headdress, seems to indicate the affinity with *Somaskanda* images. The headdress bears a *Datura* flower, presented in three dimensions as seen in certain *Natesa* and *Nataraja* images on its left side. An imperfect crescent also designed in three dimensions is seen on the right near the top of the headdress. There are *makara kundalas* in both ears. The inner of the two necklaces is very broad and plain. The outer one appears to have been designed with an ornamental centrepiece, but its surface is now quite smooth. The sacred thread is divided into three, its broad central portion being looped over the right forearm, a feature that shows that it is early *Chola* piece emerging from *Pallava* type image depiction – a continuum. The face and breast of the antelope are turned towards *Siva*. The *Jata makuta* is decorated with a jewel in the centre. There are jewels on the upper arms in the shape of trident with two small projections on either side (total five-to signify the five elements-*panchamahabhoothas*).

▲
Sl.No. 111
UMASAHITA

Sl.No. 112
UMASAHITA
▼



Sl.No. 113
VEENADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI

Sl.No. 114
VEERABHADRA

Sl.No. 115
VISHAPAHARANA

▲
Sl.No. 1
BALAKRISHNA

▲
Sl.No. 2
BALAKRISHNA

◀ Sl.No. 3
BALAKRISHNA

VAISHNAVITE BRONZES

Sl.No. 1. *BALAKRISHNA*

Acc. No. 107; Ht. 51cm.; Br. 38 cm.;

Provenance : *SRINIVASANALLUR*, MUSIRI TK.,TIRUCHIRAPALLI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

The figure of *Balakrishna* is depicted in dancing pose on a lotus pedestal attached to a square pedestal. He has *kesa bandha* with decorative jewels. He wears three necklaces, *udarabhandha, keyuras, kankanas,* hip ornaments and *padasaras*. The right hand is extended forward as in most images of *Navanitakrishna* as if holding the butterball. The *makara kundalas* are noteworthy.

Sl.No. 2. *BALAKRISHNA*

Acc. No. 110/49; Ht. 42 cm.; Br 25 cm.;

Provenance : *ALANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST, TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Balakrishna dances with the left leg planted on the *padma peetah* over *bhadra peetah* and the right one is lifted up. The right hand is in *abhaya* and the left is in *danda mudra*. He wears an ornamented tiara, *patra kundalas* and necklaces.

Sl.No. 3. *BALAKRISHNA*

Acc. No. 52/37; Ht. 54 cm.; Br. 35 cm.;

Provenance : *ALATTUR*, ERSTWHILE SOUTH ARCOT DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Balakrishna dances on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah* with four circular rings on either side. He is on his left leg and the right is raised and bent. The right hand is in the *abhaya* and the left outstretched. The hair is worked like a *kesa bandha* with a *siraschakra*. Ornaments are small, imperfectly made *makara kundalas*, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, anklets, *padasaras, channavira* and waist string with small ornamental bells are present.

Sl.No. 4. *BALAKRISHNA*

Acc. No. 320/55; Ht. 49 cm.; Br. 28 cm.;

Provenance : UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Balakrishna dances with his right hand in *abhaya mudra*, while the left hand is in

danda mudra. He stands with his left leg on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He wears *jata makuta*, *siraschakra* and the usual ornaments.

Sl.No. 5. BALAKRISHNA

Acc. No. 102; Ht. 49 cm.; Br. 30 cm.;

Provenance : *PARITTIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The image is in a dancing pose with the right hand held in *abhaya mudra* and the left outstretched. The pedestal shows an inscription in modern Tamil characters with the following meaning: "The God that gave the leg. The gift of Tittar Nayakar for the merit of Kayilappa Mudaliyar." The image has *makara kundalas*. Neither waistband nor string round the stomach is present above the girdle.

Sl.No. 6. BHUDEVI

Acc. No. 83B/44; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 11 cm.;

Provenance : *AVIDI*, EAST GODAVARI DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Bhudevi stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah* carrying a lotus in her right hand. Her left hand is in *lola hasta*. She wears *karanda makuta*, necklaces, armlets, anklets, bracelets etc. The tassels are quite prominent. The figure is in stylised form.

Sl.No. 7. BHUDEVI

Acc. No. 301/54; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *NEDUVASAL*, THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Bhudevi stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah* in a *tribanga* pose. The hands are in *kataka* and *lola* pose. *Karanda makuta*, *siraschakra*, *kundalas*, necklaces, sacred thread etc. are seen. No rings or prongs are found in the pedestal.

Sl.No. 8. BHUDEVI

Acc. No. 115A/50; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : *YERRAMPALEM*, EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This is a crude later period piece. The headdress is similar to those found in Nepal bronzes. The facial features are also of Eastern type (Orissa) like the

Sl.No. 4
BALAKRISHNA

Sl.No. 5
BALAKRISHNA

◀ Sl.No. 6

Sl.No. 7 ▶

BHUDEVI

◀ Sl.No. 8

Sl.No. 9 ▶

Balakrishna in the Government Museum. She stands on a cup like pedestal fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. She wears a broad necklace, shoulder tassels, elaborate ear ornaments, long chain with pendant, *yagnopavita, bahu valayas, valayas* and *padasaras*. Her lower garment is again in the eastern style. She holds a lotus in her right hand and her left hand is in *lola hasta*.

Sl.No. 9. BHUDEVI

Acc. No. 302/54; Ht. 43 cm.; Br. 17 cm.;

Provenance : *NEDUVASAL*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This is a small image, with crude workmanship. *Siraschakra* is shown. There are rings on the pedestal.

Sl.No. 10. BHUDEVI

Acc. No. 165/50; Ht. 42 cm.; Br. 13 cm.

Provenance : *THIRUVADUTHURAI*, THIRUVIDAIMARUDUR TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Bhudevi is depicted standing in *tribhanga posture* on a round *padma peetah* attached to a square base. She wears a *karanda makuta* of three tiers, necklace, *yagnopavita, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras*. Her lower garment extends below the knee. Her right hand is kept in *kataka mudra* as if holding a flower. Her left hand is kept in *ahuya varada mudra*.

Sl.No. 11. BHUDEVI

Acc.No. 321B/55; Ht 26 cm; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST, TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Bhudevi is seated on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. She holds a lily flower in her right hand and her left hand is portrayed in *ahuya varada mudra*. She wears *makara kundalas* in her ears. Her head is adorned with a *karanda makuta*. She also wears necklaces, *keyuras, valayas* and *padasaras* as ornaments. The sacred thread is seen.

Sl.No. 12. CHAKRA

Acc. No. 11/31; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 23 cm.;

Provenance : *KALICHERU*, NELLORE DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The *chakra* has crossed equilateral triangles in the centre enclosing a star like design. Four marginal flames are present; the bottom one flanked by *yali* like animals. The whole is placed on a *padma peetah* which is placed on top of a *bhadra peetah*.

Sl.No. 13. CHAKRA

Acc. No. 476/62; Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 26 cm.;

Provenance : *PERUMARUDUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The Discus has sixteen spokes, four marginal flames and two supporting rampant lions. There is a *kirti mukha* at the central hub of the discus.

Sl.No. 14. CHAKRA (SUDARSHANA)

Acc. No. 186; Ht. 61 cm.; Br. 41 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The Discus has a central flame, four marginal flames eight rays and two supporting lions.

Sl.No. 15. CHAKRA (SUDARSANA PURUSHA)

Acc. No. 190; Ht. 23 cm.; Br. 18 cm.

Provenance : UNKNOWN,

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

The image has crossed equilateral triangles in the centre with a six armed figure in front, which carries discus, conch, arrow, bow, lotus and mace. A marginal garland above, and at sides, four flames and two streamers are seen.

Sl.No. 16. DHANVANTARI

Acc. No. 38; Ht. 4.5 cm. - with the disc slightly more; Br. 3.5 cm.

Provenance : *ULANDANGUDI*, TIRUCHIRAPALLI TK., TIRUCHIRAPALLI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The left hand holds a flask of medicine while the right has a ball of medicine or

◀ Sl.No. 10
BHUDEVI

Sl.No. 11 ▶
BHUDEVI

▲
Sl.No. 12

▲
Sl.No. 13

CHAKRA

Sl.No. 14
▼

Sl.No. 15
▼

some substance. There is a round halo behind his head on which the *chakra* and *sankha*, the symbols of Lord *Vishnu* are shown as bas-relief. The hair do comes right to the forehead with a top knot on the head. He wears *patra kundalas* in his ears and a necklace. He wears the sacred thread and an *udarabandha*. He also has shoulder tassels. He is seated on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He is seated in *ardhaparyankasana*. The *bhadra peetah* is placed over another square *peetah*. The face is rounded which is characteristic of Kerala figures.

Sl.No. 17. GARUDA

Acc. No. 158; Ht. 26 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The image is half kneeling with the palms of the hands raised to support the feet of *Vishnu*. The image is very crude with a single headed cobra hood in the front of the *kirita makuta* headdress, on the outer side of the *todus* in the ears and on the lowest necklace above the left breast. Behind the head is a small stand for *Vishnu*. The right knee is on the ground and the left one is raised.

Sl.No. 18. GARUDA

Acc. No. 154; Ht. 29 cm.; Br. 16 cm.

Provenance : *KANKODUTHAVANITHAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The deity stands on a platform with a socket beneath to fit on the top of a cylindrical base pillar. In his right hand he holds the tail of a five headed cobra, on the neck of which his right foot is placed. His left hand rests against his hip. A pair of outwardly curved tusks protrudes from his upper jaw as in terrifying forms of *Siva*. There are *patra kundalas* in his ears. The drum and two pipes on the ground at his feet are for heralding the approach of *Vishnu*. Six feathers of his wings protrude on the right and left sides from the body. He has a strutted *makuta*.

Sl.No. 19. HANUMAN

Acc. No. 164; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 17 cm.;

Provenance : SOUTH INDIA;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

In this South Indian icon, *Hanuman* stands as a devotee. This image is very

ornate and conforms to stereotypes of his bronze image. The hair is tied in a *kesa bandha* on top of the head, the sacred thread divides into two and the waistband is present. The forehead is marked with a *namam* conforming to the *Vadagalai* form. This conforms to *Chola* idiom.

Sl.No. 20. HANUMAN

Acc. No. 167; Ht. 10 cm.; Br. 12 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Standing with his right hand raised as if to strike a blow, this tiny bronze is a good translation of the theme usually found in *Vijayanagar* sculptures. During the time of *Vijayanagar* period, *Hanuman* cult became very popular. He is depicted as giving a clarion call to assemble the victorious warriors. Near fort entrances sculptures of this design were consecrated. In this particular bronze he is depicted in standing pose on a rectangular pedestal as if giving a call to rally the warriors.

Sl.No. 21. KALIYAKRISHNA

Acc. No. 123; Ht. 75 cm.; Br. 30 cm.;

Provenance : *NILAPPADI*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Krishna has *makara kundalas* in his ears and a small ornamental loop on each side of his girdle. His right hand is in *abhaya* pose. *Kaliya* has a human bust with hands in the *anjali* pose beneath the cobra hood.

Sl.No. 22. KALIYAKRISHNA

Acc. No. 124; Ht. 35 cm.; Br. 30 cm

Provenance : *PANDARAVADAI*, PAPANASAM TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

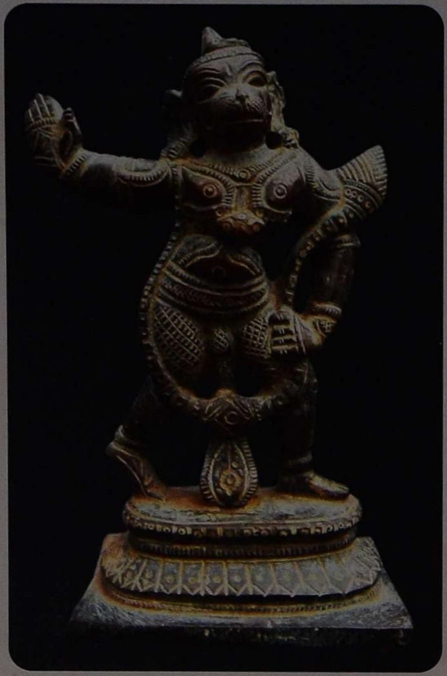
Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Krishna is depicted as if dancing over the spread hoods of *Kaliya*. He has a raised right leg. He holds the tail of the *Kaliya* (snake) with his left hand. His right hand is in *abhaya mudra*. *Kaliya* has a human bust with his hood and heads turned to *Krishna's* right. *Krishna* has *patra kundalas* in his ears and no loops to his girdle.

Sl.No. 16
DHANVANTARI

Sl.No. 17
GARUDA

Sl.No. 18
GARUDA



Sl.No. 19
HANUMAN

Sl.No. 21
KALIYAKRISHNA

Sl.No. 22
KALIYAKRISHNA

Sl.No. 20
HANUMAN

Sl.No. 23. KRISHNA AS SANTANAGOPALA

Acc. No. 81; Ht. 30 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The baby *Krishna* is depicted as trying to suck his right toe. He holds the right foot which has been brought near his mouth with his left hand. He keeps his right hand on the right thigh. His entire body except head is decorated with floral and rounded designs recalling the habit of tattooing.

Sl.No. 24. KRISHNA AS VATAPATRASAYI

Acc. No. 80; Length: Leaf with stalk 8.5 cm.; Br. 4 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa Early 17th Century AD.

From the style, we can say that it is an image influenced by the British Raj. The hair style is cropped in British fashion. The figure is made of brass. It is an image in European rather than Indian style. It forms a marked contrast to all the others in the collection.

Sl.No. 25. KRISHNA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 21/33; Krishna Ht. 73 cm.; Br.26 cm., Rukmini Ht. 52 cm.; Br.22 cm.,;

Sathyabhama Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 22 cm.

Provenance : *ADIKUDI*, UNDIVIDED TRICHY DISTRICT,

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

Krishna stands in *tribhanga* on a *padma peetah*. The right hand has a detachable *sendu* and the left looks as if trying to rest on the shoulder of *Sathyabhama*. *Kesabandha* on the head, the right ear with *makara kundalas* and the left with *patra kundalas* are seen. Among ornaments special mention may be made of the *bajibandha* (armlet) and the *bhringipada*.

Rukmini stands on the right of *Krishna* on a *padma peetah*. Her right hand hangs down and the left is in *kataka mudra*. The hair is secured in a beautiful knot as in the case of *cholamadevi* image at *Sri Kalahasti*. *Kuchabandha* is absent but *baji bandha* is seen.

Sathyabhama stands on the left side of *Krishna* and is similar to *Rukmini* in all repects except in the pose of her figure and also that her right hand is in *Kataka* while her left hangs down. *Bajibandha* is shown.

Sl.No. 26. LAKSHMINARAYANA

Acc. No. 39; Ht. with *prabha* 21 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : *CHIMAKURTI*, ONGOLE TK., GUNTUR DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The prabha is shown with a seven-headed cobra, discus, *makaras*, *yali*, conch and foliage over the head of *Vishnu*. One of the four arms of *Vishnu* is in *abhaya mudra* and one arm is around *Lakshmi*. The discus and fingers of the back right hand of *Vishnu* image are broken and missing. The *Vadagalai namam* is shown on *Vishnu's* forehead.

Sl.No. 27. NARASIMHA

Acc. No. 64; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 49 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The deity has four pairs of arms holding the conch, discus, entrails, leg and head of the demon and seems as if tearing the stomach. The image is somewhat formal of moderate workmanship with *kirita makuta* and *Tengalai namam*. *Prabha* arises from *makara* below, *yali* head in middle above, flames on outer edge.

In this image, *Narasimha* is shown in action tearing out the entrails of *Hiranyakasipu*. He has four pairs of hands , the uppermost hands carry the discus and conch, the next lower carry the entrails of *Hiranyakasipu*, the next holds the demon and the lowest tears his stomach. The facial expression is fierce and almost real.

Sl.No. 28. NARASIMHA WITH LAKSHMI AND PRAHLADA

Acc. No. 63; Hight of *Narasimha* 20, 21.5 cm., of other two figures 13, 14 cm. The Lotus pedestals (though *Lakshmi's* pedestal is unfinished) are on a rectangular base 29 cm long by 6.5 cm wide by 5 cm high. Total Ht. 27cm.; Br. 29 cm.

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Narasimha has eight pairs of hands. The lowermost hands have the entrails of

▲
Sl.No. 23
KRISHNA AS SANTANAGOPALA

Sl.No. 24
KRISHNA AS VATAPATRASAYI
▼

▲ Sl.No. 25
KRISHNA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 26 ▶
LAKSHMINARAYANA

◀ Sl.No. 27
NARASIMHA

Sl.No. 28
NARASIMHA WITH LAKSHMI AND PRAHLADA

Sl.No. 29
NAVANITAKRISHNA

Sl.No. 30
NAVANITAKRISHNA

Hiranyakasipu; the next pair has the noose and axe; the next has the arrow and bow; the next the discus and conch; the next pair seems as if tearing open the stomach, the next holds a club and something not identifiable; the next holds the sword and shield; and the next pair holds the demon's legs and head. *Lakshmi* has two pairs of hands, the upper ones each holding a bunch of flowers. It has practically the form of a discus with flame above, the lower ones in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses respectively. *Prahlada* is present with one pair of hands in the *anjali* pose.

These images are very crude, but form a group not commonly seen. Each wears *kirita makuta.* The *Lakshmi* image appears to be made of brass, and each of its earrings bears a mango shaped pendant. *Prahlada* in addition to the usual clothing and ornaments wears an *angavastram* (shoulder cloth) over his shoulders, though in the presence of a God this is considered most disrespectful. *Narasimha* and *Prahlada* have the *Tengalai namam* (Y shaped as against the U shape of the *Vadagalai namam*), *Lakshmi* the *tilak*.

Sl.No. 29. NAVANITAKRISHNA

Acc. No. 109; Ht. 52 cm.; Br. 33 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUPUVANAM,* MADURAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

A dancing image with *patra kundalas* in the ears. The string around the stomach is tied on the left side in front and the girdle which is reduced to a string of bells on the right side in front. He holds a butter ball in his right hand while the left is in *danda mudra.*

Sl.No. 30. NAVANITAKRISHNA

Acc. No. 99; Ht. 52.5 cm.; Br. 39 cm.;

Provenance : *ULUNDANGUDI,* TIRUCHIRAPALLI TK., TIRUCHIRAPALLI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

A dancing image with the right hand in *abhaya mudra*. In this he is poised on his left leg, the right one being raised. There are lotus buds behind the ears and *patra kundalas* on the ear lobes. There is no waistband but a string is tied around

the stomach, from which a single tassel extends along the front of the right leg and a pair along the front of the left. The girdle rests on the upper part of the thighs on top of the tassels. It is tied in an ornamental knot on the left side at the back, a dagger being attached in a corresponding position on the right side.

Sl.No. 31. RAMA

Acc. No. 1420/87; Ht. 26 cm.; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Rama, an incarnation of *Vishnu* is depicted in standing pose on a lotus pedestal. The left and right hands respectively are in the classical *Rama* pose of holding the bow and arrow. He wears a *udarabandha, yagnopavita,* two necklaces, a *skandhamala* on his shoulders, *Bahu valayas* on his forearms and *kankanas* on the wrists. The lower garment is artistically designed with tassels and string work. This is an excellent *Nayak* period piece.

Sl.No. 32. RAMA

Acc. No. 495/65; Ht. 88 cm.; Br. 36 cm.;

Provenance : *OLAYAKKUNNAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This image stands on a round *padma peetah* over a square *bhadra peetah* in *tribhanga* posture. He is depicted holding a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right hand.

RAMA ENSEMBLE

Sl.No. 33. RAMA

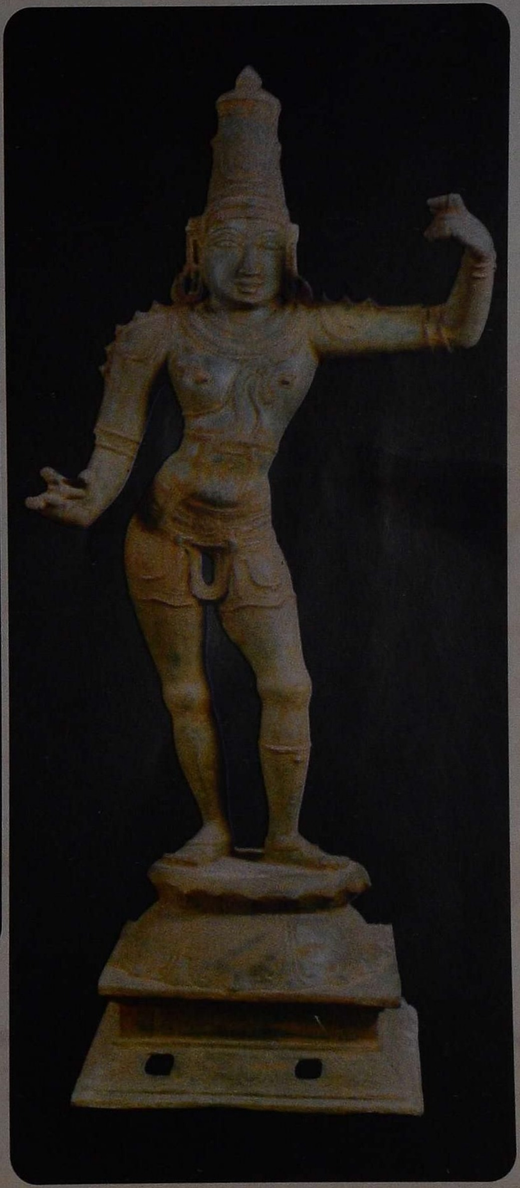
Acc. No. 315/55; Ht. 104 cm.; Br. 53 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVALANGADU,* MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

Rama is standing on a *padma peetah* in the *tribhanga* pose. He wears *kirita makuta* and *siraschakra* and other ornaments. The hands are held in the posture of holding a bow in the left hand and an arrow in the right one.

Sl.No. 31
RAMA



Sl.No. 32
RAMA

Sl.No. 33
RAMA, LAKSHMANA, SITA & HANUMAN

LAKSHMANA

Acc. No. 316/55; Ht. 93 cm.; Br. 42 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVALANGADU*, MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

He is similar to *Rama* in all respects but smaller in size. His hair-do is in the form of a *jata makuta.*

SITA

Acc. No. 317/55; Ht. 86 cm.; Br. 33 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVALANGADU*, MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

She is standing on a *padma peetah* in the *tribhanga* pose. Her right hand is in *lola hasta* pose and the left hand in the *kataka* pose. She wears *jata makuta, haaras, valayas, channavira,* waistband etc. in the usual manner. A *siraschakra* is seen on the head.

HANUMAN

Acc. No. 318/55; Ht. 73 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVALANGADU*, MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

He is standing on a *padma peetah.* He wears *jata makuta, siraschakra, udhara bhanda* etc. His hands are held in the usual supplicating manner, since he workships *Rama* always.

Sl.No. 34. SITA

Acc. No. 1097/82; Ht. 34 cm.; Br. 15 cm.;;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 19th Century AD.

This piece is crude. *Sita* wears a *kucha bandha* (breast band) and a lower garment with floral design. The crown with its ear attachments reminds us of the headdress worn by *therukoothu* (street play, a folk art form). She holds a lotus in her left hand and her right hand is in *lola hasta. Skandhamala, bahu valayas* and *kankanas* on the wrists are seen.

Sl.No. 35. SRIDEVI

Acc. No. 685/72; Ht. 42 cm.; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : *CHETTIPULAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

This is a classical later *Chola* period piece. The headdress is in *karanda makuta*. It differs from the normal *karanda makuta*. The usual balance seen among the three tiers is absent. She wears a broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *kucha bandha*, elaborate ear ornaments, *yagnopavita*, *bahu valayas*, *valayas* and *padasaras*. Her lower garment has well designed decorations. She holds a lotus in her left hand and her right hand is in *lola hasta*.

Sl.No. 36. SRIDEVI

Acc. No. 1475/88; Ht. 18cm.; Br. 6 cm.

Provenance : *JAYAMKONDAN*, PERAMBALUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

The headdress is in *karanda makuta*. She stands on a *padma peetah* fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. She wears a broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *kucha bandha*, elaborate ear ornaments, *channavira*, *bahu valayas*, *kankanas* and *padasaras*. Her lower garment is decorated with wavy designs. She holds a lotus in her left hand and her right hand is in *lola hasta*.

Sl.No. 37. SRIDEVI

Acc. No. 115/50; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : *YERRAMPALEM*, EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

She stands in *tribhanga* with the right hand in *lola hasta* and the left holding a lotus bud. She wears strutted *karanda makuta*, ear rings which look like the *patra kundalas*, necklaces including an elongated one and the lower garment reaching to the knees. No *kucha bandha* is seen. She stands on a stylised calyx of a *padma* over a *bhadrasana*. *Siraschakra* is seen. In the absence of a *kucha bandha* the identification of *Sridevi* has been made on the position of the hand holding the lotus. With that pose the figure has to be placed on the right side of her consort. Usually *Sridevi* is placed on the right side of the Lord *Vishnu*.

Sl.No. 34
SITA

Sl.No. 35
SRIDEVI

Sl.No. 36
SRIDEVI

Sl.No. 37
SRIDEVI

Sl.No. 38
SRIDEVI

Sl.No. 39
SRIDEVI

Sl.No. 38. SRIDEVI

Acc. No. 164/50; Ht. 42 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVADUTHURAI*, THIRUVIDAIMARUDUR TK., THANJAVUR DIST; TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Sridevi stands on a *padma peetah* over *bhadra peetah*. *Siraschakra, karanda makuta, patra kundalas* are seen. The hands are in *kataka* and *varada mudras*. Her lower garment is fully designed. She wears breast band and *yagnopavita*.

Sl.No. 39. SRIDEVI

Acc. No. 321A/55; Ht. 26 cm; Br. 14 cm.

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST.; TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

Sridevi is seated on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. She is holding a lotus flower in her left hand and her right hand is portrayed in *varada mudra*. She is wearing a *karanda makuta* on her head. She wears *patra kundalas* in her ears. She also wears shoulder tassels, *keyuras*, necklaces, a breast-band, *channavira, udarabandha* and *padasaras* as ornaments.

Sl.No. 40. SRINIVASA

Acc. No. 1889/96; Ht. 33.5 cm; Br. 22.5 cm.

Provenance : *THIRUMARUGAL*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST.; TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 18th Century AD.

The image has elaborate features with a beautiful pear shaped *prabha* with flames on the edges. He stands on a *padma peetah* fixed on a square pedestal. The conch and discus are carried in the upper arms. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra* while the lower left hand is depicted as if touching the *gada* (mace). The sacred thread, *bahu valayas, kankanas* and *kati sutra* are seen. The lower garment is artistically decorated.

Sl.No. 41. SRINIVASA

Acc. No. 1421/87; Ht. 29 cm.; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 18th Century AD.

The image is elaborately carved. He stands on a *padma peetah* fixed on a *bhadra*

peetah. The conch in the upper left hand is obscured by the elaborate treament of the flames. The upper right hand holds the discus. The lower right hand is in *varada* and the lower left hand is depicted as touching the *gada* (mace). Both discus and conch have the usual marginal flames but no central ones. The sacred thread, *bahu valayas*, *kankanas* and *kati sutra* are seen. The lower garment is artistically decorated.

Sl.No. 42. SRINIVASA

Acc. No. 30; Ht. 64 cm.; Br. 26 cm.;

Provenance : *VADAKADU*, THIRUTTURAIPPOONDI TK., TIRUVARUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

The treatment is very formal in this image. The flames on the discus and conch are somewhat large but the central ones though present in front are absent behind. *Vadagalai namam* is present.

Sl.No. 43. SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 29; Ht. *Srinivasa* 81 cm., *Sridevi*: 64 cm., *Bhudevi* : 64 cm. Br. *Srinivasa* 33 cm. *Sridevi*: 21 cm., *Bhudevi* : 21 cm.;

Provenance : *VADAKKUPPANAIYUR*, NAGAPATTINAM TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa Third decade of the 11th Century AD.

The conch is *Idampuri*. This is a set of images of *Chola* type but with the discus held at right angles to the sagittal plane of the body. Both discus and conch have the usual marginal flames but no central ones. *Sridevi* wears an elaborate necklace, *channavira* and *kucha bandha*. *Bhudevi* wears an elaborate necklace and sacred thread. *Kucha bandha* and *channavira* are absent.

Sl.No. 44. SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 31; Ht. 76 cm.; Br. 26 Cms., Ht. of Sridevi and Bhudevi 62 cm.; 62 cm., Br. 20 cm.; 20 cm.;

Provenance : *SRINIVASANALLUR*, MUSIRI TK., TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The draperies including the median loop of the girdle are treated conventionally and the flames on the discus and conch are very small.

▲ Sl.No. 40

SRINIVASA

▲ Sl.No. 41

◀ Sl.No. 42

Sl.No. 43
SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 44
SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 45. SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 28; Ht. of Srinivasa : 45 cm.; Br. 20 cm., Ht. of Devis : 35 cm.; Br. 10 cm.;

Provenance : *SIRUPPANAIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The discus of *Srinivasa*, which has flames issuing from the centre on both sides, is held almost parallel to the sagittal plane of the body. The conch, which is held sinistrally has only a single marginal pair of flames. As regard the *Devis*, the poses of their hands are in reverse of the canonical arrangement. The left hand of *Sri Devi* and the right hand of *Bhu Devi* usually bear flowers, while their other hands are held in *lola hasta*. Their elbow bands bear a projecting ornament on the outer side which is particulary conspicuous. The lobes of ears of both *Devis* are pierced and enlarged, hanging so as to touch the shoulder ornaments, but there is no clear indication of earrings. The *patra kundalas* usually worn by *Sridevi* are absent.

Sl.No. 46. SURYA

Acc. No. 354; Ht. 56 cm., Br.19 cm.;

Provenance : *HARISCHANDRAPURAM*, KUMBAKONAM TK., THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

Surya's head has a *karanda makuta* with a halo behind his head. He wears *makara kundalas*. He has a pair of hands with a lotus in each. Necklaces, draperies, etc. are shown as in the *Chola* images. The sacred thread is undivided. The folds of the short cloth are depicted beautifully.

Sl.No. 47. TIRUMANGAI ALWAR

Acc. No. 181; Ht. 75 cm.; Br. 29 cm.;

Provenance : *SRINIVASANALLUR*, MUSIRI TK., TIRUCHIRAPALLI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This image is finished very well. The knot of hair, which is portrayed in the finest detail, is situated behind the centre of the head; but the image is identified by the *kataka* pose of the two hands meant for receiving the sword and shield, which are missing. There are small lotus buds behind the ears and pendants hang from the lobes (*patra kundalas*).

Sl.No. 48. *THIRUMANGAI ALWAR*

Acc. No. 1542/ 89; Ht. 38 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This is a well finished image of the *Nayak* period. Pendants hang from the ear lobes (*patra kundalas*). The image has a battle axe in the right hand while the left holds a long *danda* (spear). The head sports *kesa bandha* and there is a *Vaishnava* religious mark on the forehead (*Naamam*). He wears a long chain with a pendent, *udarabandha* and an elaborate lower garment.

Sl.No. 49. *THIRUMANGAI ALWAR*

Acc. No. 475/62; Ht. 66cm.; Br. 22.5 cm.;

Provenance : *KALPATTU*, ERSTWHILE SOUTH ARCOT DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

This is an excellent image of the late *Chola* period. He wears *patra kundalas*, a necklace, *bahu valayas* and *kankanas* . The lower garment is artistic with an *urumala* (thigh ornament) on each fold of the dhoti . The bronze reminds us of the features found in the famous *Darasuram* temple (near *Kumbakonam*, Thanjavur district) sculptures.

Sl.No. 50. *TONDARADIPPODI ALWAR*

Acc. No. 179; Ht. 47 cm.; Br. 19 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUPPUVANAM*, SIVAGANGA TK., SIVAGANGA DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

The basket hangs on the left arm. A *vadagalai* style *namam* is portrayed on the forehead. The name *'Tondaradippodi alwar'* is inscribed on the pedestal in modern Tamil characters.

Sl.No. 51. *VAIKUNTHANATHA WITH CONSORTS*

Acc. No. 36; Ht. *Vaikunthanatha* : 22 cm., Sridevi : 17 cm., Bhudevi : 17 cm.;

Br. *Vaikunthanatha* : 16 cm., Sridevi : 11 cm., Bhudevi : 11 cm.

Provenance : *POLAGAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Vishnu's left hand rests on his serpent throne and his right forearm rests on his

Sl.No. 45
SRINIVASA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 46
SURYA

▲
Sl.No. 47
TIRUMANGAI ALWAR

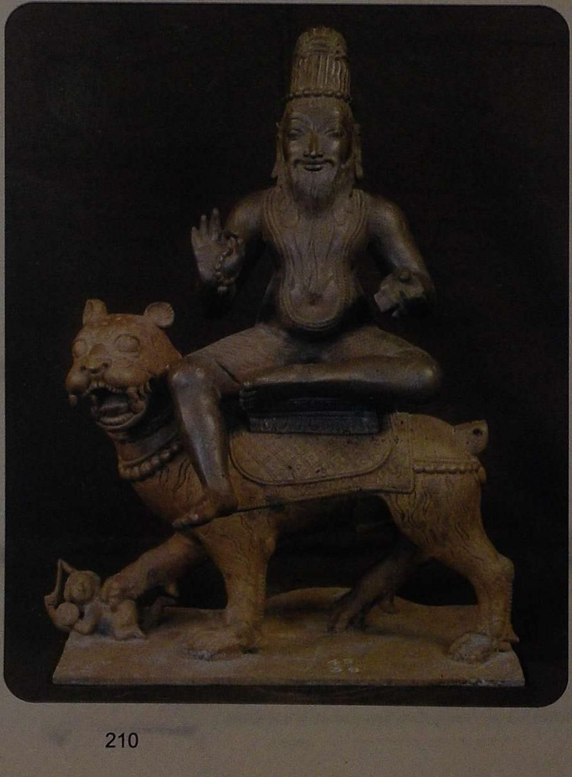
Sl.No. 49
TIRUMANGAI ALWAR
▼

Sl.No. 50
TONDARADIPPODI ALWAR
▼

▲
Sl.No. 48
TIRUMANGAI ALWAR

Sl.No. 51
VAIKUNTHANATHA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 52
VAMANA (GOD)



Sl.No. 53
VAMANA (SAGE)

knee. The treatment of these images is much the same as that of *Srinivasa*. The image of *Vishnu* has the *Srivatsa* mole. Both the *Devis* wear *patra kundalas*.

Sl.No. 52. VAMANA (GOD)

Acc. No. 71; Ht. 12 cm.; Br. 4.5 cm.;

Provenance : *MULLANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Vamana holds the *vedas* and a water vessel in his hands. The umbrella is absent. The figure does not stand on a pedestal.

On the top of the head is a tuft of hair directed forward. The only clothing is a narrow strip of cloth between his legs, attached at either end to a string round the waist; but all the usual ornaments are present. The *vedas* are in the form of a palm leaf manuscript, the bundle of leaves being secured by two bands.

Sl.No. 53. VAMANA (SAGE)

Acc. No. 45/36; Ht. 46 cm.; Br. 31 cm.;

Provenance : *MADRAS (CHENNAI)*, TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This is an image of sage *Vamana* in copper, seated on a *padma peetah* in the *sukhasana* pose. The image is so made that the *padma peetah* can slide over an elevated seatshaped rest on the back of the *vahana* in brass. The sage has *jata makuta* and finely worked beard. In his right hand, which is in the *chinmudra*, attitude there is a rosary. The left hand holds a book. There are chains of beads on the neck coming up nearly to the waist. The *vahana* is a fierce tiger trampling a demon and is made of brass. There is an inscription beneath the plate on which the tiger stands stating that the image is of *Vamana*.

Sl.No. 54. VARADARAJA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 21; Ht. Varadaraja : 95 cm., *Sridevi* : 76 cm., *Bhudevi*: 76 cm. Br. *Varadaraja*: 37 cm., *Sridevi* : 23 cm., *Bhudevi* : 23 Cms. Base Ht. 22cm.; Br.124 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUPPUVANAM*, SIVAGANGA TK., SIVAGANGA DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th - 17th Centuries AD.

The conch is *valampuri* (whorls rising to the right and coiling in an anti-clockwise

direction). The lotus pedestals of all three images rest on a massive stand which also supports the encircling *prabha*.

The ornamentation of this set of images is very elaborate. The basal flame of both conch and discus is divided into two parts, which bend in opposite directions, so that each appears to have five marginal flames. The latter but not the former has a central flame in front but not behind. *Sridevi* wears solid *todus* in her ears in place of the usual pierced *patra kundalas*. *Varada*raja wears three necklaces and the *Devis* in addition to the *tali*, two necklaces of which the lower is very broad and highly ornamented and supports a row of mango shaped pendants. *Varada*raja's mole is not of the usual simple triangular shape. All the details of the figure have however, now disappeared. All three figures wear anklets and each has its own type of drapery, differing somewhat from that of the others.

Sl.No. 55. VARAHA

Acc. No. 59; Ht. 56 cm.; Br. 28 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 15th -16th Century AD.

This is a beautiful image. *Varaha* raises his foot and rests it on the head of a cobra. The discus is held parallel to the sagittal plane of the body. He holds Goddess *Lakshmi* by his lower left hand. She is seated on the raised left thigh. The front right hand is in the *abhaya* pose. *Lakshmi's* left hand holds a lotus, which conforms to the stereotype with the seed receptacle exposed.

Sl.No. 56. VENUGOPALA

Acc. No. 126; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 13 cm.;

Provenance : SOUTH INDIA,

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

This image is very florid in style. The image has *makara kundalas* in both ears; the triangular mole as *srivatsa* is absent. Outer necklace hangs low between breasts. Sacred thread is undivided and waistband is close to the girdle.

Sl.No. 54
VARADARAJA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 55
VARAHA

Sl.No. 56
VENUGOPALA

Sl.No. 57
VENUGOPALA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 58
VENUGOPALA WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 57. VENUGOPALA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 133; Ht. of *Venugopala* : 11.5 cm. Br. 6 cm.; Ht. of *Devis* : 10.5 cm. Br. 5 cm.;

Provenance : *CHIMAKURTI*, GUNTUR DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 18th Century AD.

An elaborately designed and beautifully finished set. *Venugopala*'s hair is tied in an almost spherical *kesa bandha*, secured by a band that extends over it from one side to the other and decorated with flowers below. Neither of his consorts have a breast band; both wear *karanda makuta* and a long necklace that hangs between the breasts. All three figures have *patra kundalas* in their ears.

Sl.No. 58. VENUGOPALA WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 135; Ht. *Venugopala* with pedestal including coronet : 23.5 cm., *Rukmini* : 18.5 cm., *Sathyabhama* : 19 cm.; Br. *Venugopala* : 9 cm., *Rukmini* : 7 cm., *Sathyabhama* : 7 cm.;

Provenance : *CHIMMAKURTI*, ONGOLE TK., GUNTUR DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 11th Century AD.

All three figures wear *patra kundalas*. The two consorts each have a long necklace hanging between their breasts and no breast band or sacred thread. Their anklets each consist of two rings joined by a short bar in front and behind. *Venugopala's* sacred thread divides into three portions. He has a waistband in the usual place. He has a peacock feather on his head. *Rukmini* holds a lotus while *Satyabama* holds a lily. These images are simple and well proportioned.

Sl.No. 59. VISHNU

Acc. No. 571/66; Ht. 40 cm.; Br. 32 cm.;

Provenance : *KRISHNAPURAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Vishnu with four hands seated on slightly elongated *padma peetah* over a rectangular *bhadra peetah* at easy pose. He wears a *kirita makuta*. *Makara kundalas* adorn the ears. Three rows of necklaces present. He holds a discus in his upper right hand and conch in his upper left hand. His lower hands portray *abhaya* and *ahuya varada*. *Yagnopavita* is in three strands of which one goes through the trunk and other goes behind.

Sl.No. 60. VISHNU

Acc. No. 20; Ht. 50 cm.; Br. 44 cm.;

Provenance : *CHERANMAHADEVI*, TIRUNELVELI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

The image has the conch and discus in the upper pair of arms. The lower arms sport the *abhaya* and *ahuya varada mudras*. The conch is held sinistrally. The flames on the discus and conch are not very large. The central flame is missing on the front of the conch but present at the back. The pedestal is rectangular. *Vishnu* is seated in *veerasana* with his right leg resting on a projection from the pedestal.

Sl.No. 61. VISHNU

Acc. No. 15; Ht. 31 cm.; Br. 21 cm.;

Provenance : *THIRUPPUVANAM*, SIVAGANGAI TK., SIVAGANGAI DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

The image holds the discus and conch (sinistrally) in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *ahuya varada* in the lower ones. The draperies and ornaments are not highly elaborated. The two necklaces are very broad in front, especially the lower and large one. The hair behind hides the former. The latter is slender behind, where it has two additional beaded strings below it. The pedestal is rectangular with a lotus base.

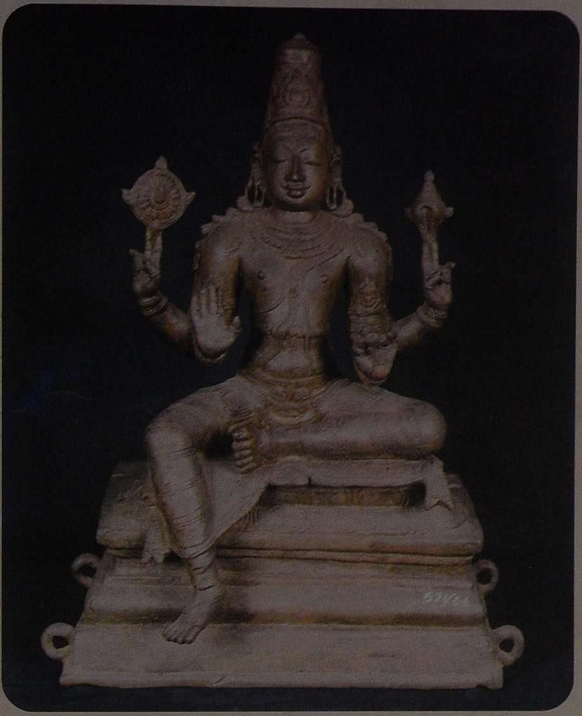
Sl.No. 62. VISHNU

Acc. No. 1888/96; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 25 cm.;

Provenance : *THIRUMARUGAL*, NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

This is a seated image on *padma peetah* in *maharaja lila* pose. The lower left hand is in *ahuya mudra*. He holds the discus and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra*. The features taken as a whole show the last phase of the *Cholas*. He wears a *karanda makuta,* broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *yagnopavita*, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras*. His lower garment is decorated with line like designs.



Sl.No. 59
VISHNU

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VISHNU

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Sl.No. 62
VISHNU

Sl.No. 63. VISHNU

Acc. No. 459/61; Ht. 14 cm.; Br. 9 cm.;

Provenance: *TIRUKKANNANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

Vishnu is seated on a high *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*. He wears a *kirita*. A thick *haara* adorns the neck. The *upavita* and *udarabandha* are prominent. He is four armed, holding the *chakra* and the *sankha* in the upper arms while the lower left has a *gada* and the lower right a lotus with a stalk that touches the right knee. The left leg is bent and rests on the seat. The right leg hangs down being supported by an attachment to the lotus base. The *uttariya* is in the form of a big loop. It starts from the pedestal, goes around the upper pair of arms, over the right leg and is finally joined to the side face of the pedestal. Two stumps are provided to receive the *prabha*. The treatment of the bronze suggests that it must be late *Pallava*. The left face of the *padma peetah* near the bottom is slightly worn out.

Sl.No. 64. VISHNU

Acc. No. 321/55; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 24 cm.;

Provenance: *THIRUVELANGADU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

This is a seated image on *a padma peetah* in *maharaja lila* pose. The lower left hand is in *ahuya mudra*. *Vishnu* holds the discus and the conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra*. The features show *Vijayanagar* influence. He wears a *karanda makuta*, broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *yagnopavita*, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras*. His lower garment is richly decorated with designs. The *srivatsa* symbol is found on the right chest.

Sl.No. 65. VISHNU

Acc. No. 554/66; Ht. 24 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance: *MANGAMMALPURAM*, UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

This is a seated image holding a *gada* in the lower left hand. *Vishnu* is seated on a lotus pedestal in *veerasana*. He holds the discus and conch in his upper right and left

hands respectively. The lotus in his lower right hand is depicted realistically. The features taken as a whole reveal the influence of *Chera* territory.

Sl.No. 66. VISHNU

Acc. No. 555/66; Ht. 25 cm.; Br. 8 cm.;

Provenance : *MANGAMMALPURAM*, UNDIVIDED TRICHY DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

This small figure of a *Vishnu* has a *kirita makuta*. He is seated with his left leg folded and right leg hanging on a lotus pedestal which is depicted as a full blown lotus on a square *bhadra peetah*. He is carrying the discus and conch on his upper hands. His lower right hand is in *varada mudra* and he holds his mace in his left hand. The *Thiruvasi* is detachable and carries 17 flames.

Sl.No. 67. VISHNU

Acc. No. 17; Ht. 16 cm.; Br. 10 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 9th Century AD.

The figure has all the usual emblems: *conch, discus, lotus* and *mace*. The *conch* is held sinistral. Presence of all six flames on the conch and discus and the treatment of the draperies suggest that this has been an elaborately decorated figure. But it is so corroded that nothing remains of the details. Its chief interest lies in the small mace held horizontally in the lower left hand and the small lotus flower corroded almost beyond recognition, that rests flat on the up turned palm of the lower right han·

Sl.No. 68. VISHNU

Acc. No. 215/52; Ht. 58 cm.; Br. 27 cm.;

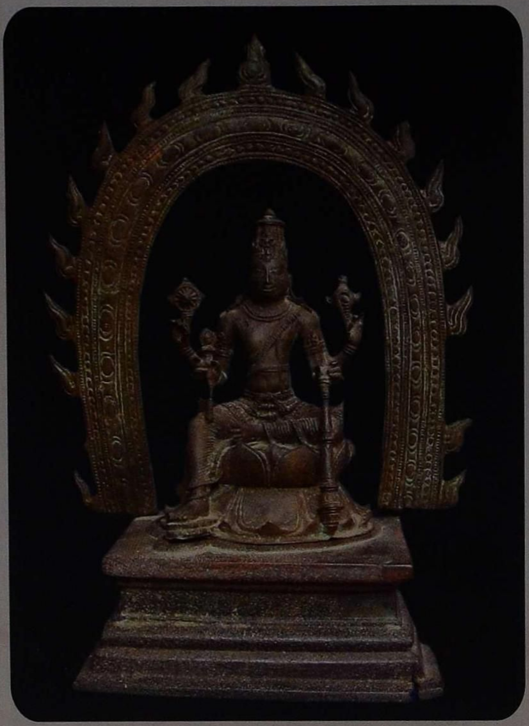
Provenance : *KOTHANGUDI*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Vishnu stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah*, which has rings and spikes. Folds in the garment are not prominent. The loop ornament is natural.

◀ Sl.No. 63
VISHNU

Sl.No. 64 ▶
VISHNU



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VISHNU

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Sl.No. 66

◀ Sl.No. 67

Sl.No. 69. VISHNU

Acc. No. 574/66; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 17 cm.

Provenance : *KRISHNAPURAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 16th Century AD.

Vishnu is standing on a *padma peetah* over a square *bhadra peetah* which has two spikes to carry aureole which is missing. He wears a *kirita makuta*. He holds a discus and a conch in his upper right and left hand respectively. His lower right hand is in *abhaya* while the lower left is in *katyavalambita*. He wears an elaborate *pitambara*. *Srivatsa* symbol is depicted on his right chest.

Sl.No. 70. VISHNU

Acc. No. 1472/88; Ht. 26 cm.; Br. 12.5 cm.;

Provenance : *BHAVANI*, ERODE DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 19th Century AD.

This is a standing image on *padma peetah* fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. The lower left hand is kept in *katya valambita mudra*. He holds discus and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right hand is in *varada mudra*. The features are crude. He wears a *karanda makuta*, broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *yagnopavita*, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha*, *keyuras*, *kankanas* and *padasaras*. His lower garment is decorated.

Sl.No. 71. VISHNU

Acc. No. 879/78; Ht. 26cm.; Br. 15 cm.;

Provenance : *PARITHIYUR*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 15th Century AD.

This is a standing image on *padma peetah* fixed on a *bhadra peetah*. The lower left hand is touching the *gada*, whose upper portion is missing . He holds discus and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right hand is broken at the forearm. The features are attractive in the Kerala style. The countenance is smiling. He wears a *kirita makuta*, broad necklace, *yagnopavita*, elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha*, *keyuras*, *kankanas* and *padasaras*. His lower garment is well decorated with loops.

Sl.No. 72. VISHNU

Acc. No. 328/55; Ht. 39 cm.; Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *TIRUVELANGADU*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Vishnu stands on a *padma peetah* over *bhadra peetah* to which is attached a *prabha* with five tongued flames around its fringe. *Vishnu's chakra* is missing. *Sankha* is present. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra*. The lower left is in *katya valambita mudra*. The image wears a *kirita* and the usual ornament. The figure is broken and cut off from the pedestal at its ankles. The *prabha* is also broken at its right side.

Sl.No. 73. VISHNU

Acc. No. 11; Ht. 80 cm.; Br. 33 cm.

Provenance : *KOMAL*, MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

This image is almost formal. There is however no lotus in the lower right hand. The presence of the maximum ordinary number of flames on both conch and discus is in keeping with the elaborate decoration of the whole image. The *Srivatsa* or raised triangular mole above the right breast has the form of a cross legged seated figure of *Sridevi*. The girdle bears the conventional median loop and lion face ornament.

Sl.No. 74. VISHNU

Acc. No. 387/57; Ht. 33 cm.; Br. 14 cm.;

Provenance : VADUVUR, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Vishnu stands on a *padma peetah* over a *bhadra peetah* with usual emblems, but the workmanship suggests a later date.

Sl.No. 75. VISHNU

Acc. No 94-4/48; Ht. 22 cm.; Br. 10 cm.;

Provenance : *PALANI*, DINDIGUL DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Vishnu as *Kesava* standing on a *padma peetah* over a broad and almost square *bhadra peetah*. He wears a *kirita makuta* with an aureole just behind and above his

Sl.No. 68
VISHNU

Sl.No. 69
VISHNU

▲ Sl.No. 70

▲ Sl.No. 71

VISHNU

Sl.No. 72 ▼

Sl.No. 73 ▼

VISHNU

Sl.No. 74

Sl.No. 75

Sl.No. 76

Sl.No. 77
VISHNU AS PANDURANGA

Sl.No. 78
VISHNU AS RANGANATHA

shoulders. There are heavy ornaments on ears. He wears necklace, braclets, wristlets and *udarabandha*. He holds discus with conch in his upper hands. His right hand is extended and holding something which is difficult to identify. His left hand holds a *gada* which rests on the *padmasana*. The workmanship exhibits some relationship with Kerala style and the treatment tends to exhibit the hand work of a potter.

Sl.No. 76. VISHNU

Acc. No. 83A/44; Ht. 49 cm. Br. 18 cm.;

Provenance : *AVIDI*, EAST GODAVARI DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

Vishnu stands on a *padma peetah*, with no petal details worked but is circular, over a *bhadra peetah* wearing a *karanda makuta*. He carries conch in the upper right arm, discus in the upper left; lotus in the lower right and mace in the left. The central and side tassels of the lower garment are prominent. Armlets, bracelets, necklaces, *kesa bandha* and *yagnopavita* are present. The waistband is broad. The figure is stylised in workmanship.

Sl.No. 77. VISHNU AS PANDURANGA

Acc. No. 34; Ht. 14 cm.; Br. 4.7 cm.;

Provenance : UNKNOWN;

Period : Circa 17th Century A D.

The deity stands on a lotus pedestal with hands on the hips (*katya valambita mudra*). The headdress is typical of *Maratha* territory. He wears a necklace, a chain in outline and *channavira* in outline connected to the necklace by the pendant. He wears a *Doha*. The history of this piece is not known.

Sl.No. 78. VISHNU AS RANGANATHA

Acc. No. 33 ; Ht. 4 cm.; Length and Breadth of pedestal - 10 cm. and 5.5 cm. the reclining figure being about 8 cm long;

Provenance : UNKNOWN,

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This is the one image by which this form of *Vishnu* is specially associated with *Srirangam*, Trichy District. Its history is not known.

On the rectangular base is a tortoise of similar dimensions i.e. scarcely half as long as broad. On this is a low lotus throne on which rest three coils of a snake whose head is missing. It presumably arose from one of two sockets, which are present at the back. *Ranganatha* reclines on these coils with a bolster under his head and a smaller one placed lengthways to support his left hip. A square socket, probably intended to support a lotus, probably with *Brahma* seated on it, represents his navel.

Sl.No. 79. VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 18; *Vishnu* Ht. 45 cm.; Br. 41 cm.; consorts Ht. 25 cm.; Br. 12 cm.; Ht. 25cm.; Br. 12 cm.;

Provenance : *KOMAL*, MAYILADUTHURAI TK., NAGAPATTINAM DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 13th Century AD.

Vishnu bears miniature emblems attached to the palms of his single pair of hands of which the right is in the *abhaya* and the left is in the *varada* position. The mole seems to have had the form of a seated image of *Lakshmi*. The *Devis* are of about equal height. *Vanamala* (a long garland) is seen going round his knees.

Sl.No. 80. VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No. 503/65; Ht. 28 cm.; Br. 22 cm.;

Provenance : *OLAYAKUNNAM*, UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 17th Century AD.

This is a seated image of *Vishnu* on *padma peetah* with his consorts. Both the lower hands are kept as if inviting the devotees . He holds discus and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The features are in the Kerala style. The countenance is smiling. He wears a *kirita makuta,* broad necklace, *yagnopavita,* elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras.* His lower garment is well decorated. His consorts on either side are depicted with folded hands in *anjali mudra.*

Sl.No. 81. VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Acc. No.500/65; *Vishnu* Ht. 44 cm.; Br. 20 cm. ;

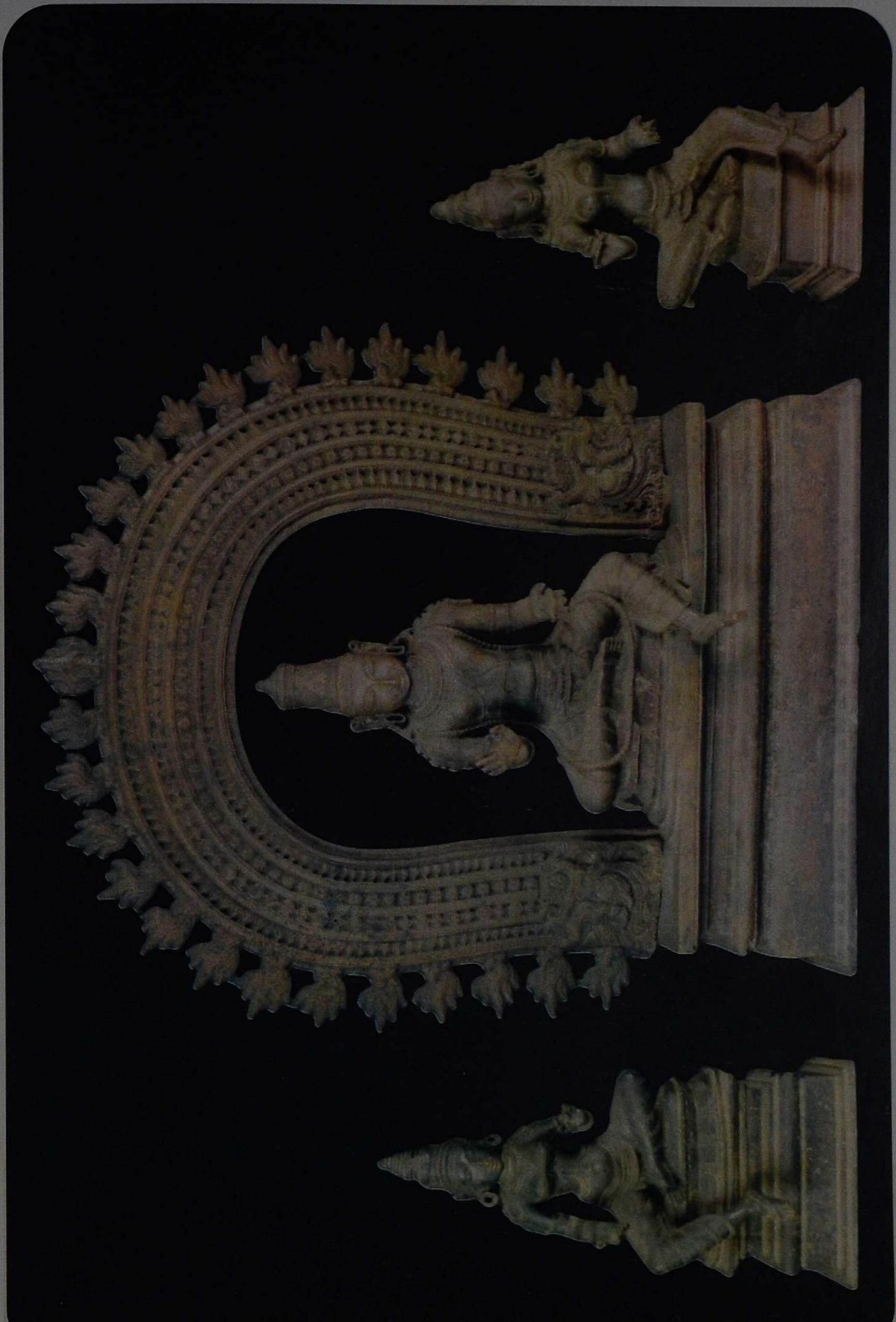
Acc. No.501/65; *Sridevi* Ht. 38 cm.; Br. 16 cm.;

Acc. No.502/65, *Bhudevi* Ht. 38 cm.; Br. 16 cm;.

Provenance : *OLAYAKUNNAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

All the three images stand on three separate square pedestals. *Vishnu's* lower left



Sl.No. 79
VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 80
VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 81
VISHNU WITH CONSORTS

Sl.No. 82
VISHNU WITH SRIDEVI AND BHUDEVI

hand is in *katya valambita mudra.* He holds the discus and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra.* The features taken as a whole show the first phase of the *Vijayanagar* period. *Vishnu* wears a *karanda makuta,* broad necklace, shoulder tassels, *yagnopavita,* elaborate ear ornaments, *udarabandha, keyuras, kankanas* and *padasaras.* His lower garment is well decorated. On his right side is *Sridevi.* She wears similar ornaments with *kucha bandha.* On the left side, *Bhudevi* also is similar except that she wears a *channavira* instead of *kucha bandha.*

Sl.No. 82. *VISHNU WITH SRIDEVI AND BHUDEVI*

Acc. No. 2 ; Ht. - *Vishnu* 83 cm., *Sridevi* : 64 cm., *Bhudevi* : 65 cm.;

Br. - *Vishnu* 33 cm., *Sridevi* : 24 cm., *Bhudevi* : 24 cm. ;

Provenance : *PERUNTHOTTAM,* UNDIVIDED THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 10th Century AD.

The Conch is *Idamburi* (Conch with whorls rising to the left and coiling in a clockwise direction); *Sridevi* is without the customary breast band.

The simple dignified treatment and light draperies of these images suggest that they date from an unusually early period. As per the classification of Jouveau – Dubreuil, the famous scholar of South Indian architecture and sculpture, this conch has the style of the stone images of later *Cholas* and *Vijayanagar* periods. Its basal flame is rendered particularly conspicuous by being bent over and extended. The discus has the slanting position, which he considers characteristic of the former and the ornamentation, which he considers characteristic of the latter of these two periods. *Vishnu's* headdress also has the form characteristic of these periods but with greater affinity to the simpler *Pallava* than to the more elaborate *Chola* form (Gravely et al., 2002 p. 63). However, it is humbly submitted that the treatment of the conch, discus and overall facial features despite the prominent nose exhibits *Chola* idiom. There need be no doubt.

Other noteworthy features are the realistic though much flattened full blown lotus flower borne on *Vishnu's* right lower hand as though held by its stalk between the first two fingers, the elegant looped knot of the sacred thread of *Vishnu* and *Bhudevi,* the head dresses and elbow ornaments of the two *Devis* and the necklaces of all three figures.

Sl.No. 83. YASODA KRISHNA

Acc. No. 90; Ht. 12.5 cm.; Br. 9 cms.;

Provenance : *THOGUR*, THANJAVUR TALUK, THANJAVUR DIST., TAMILNADU;

Period : Circa 14th Century AD.

Yasoda is seated with *Krishna* on her lap; both are on a *bhadra peetah*. *Yasoda* is seated in *lalitasana*. Her left hand rests on the four-legged rectangular pedestal while the right hand holds the head of the child. *Pattam* (an ornament) which starts on the top of the forehead is woven into the hair-do. *Yasoda* wears *patra kundlas* while *Krishna* wears *todus*. In spite of the rather crude treatment of this image, the mother's face is unusually pleasing. *Yasoda's* back rests on a long cylindrical bolster. She is breast feeding *Krishna*. Her right leg rests on a *peetah*.

Sl.No. 83
YASODA KRISHNA

Bronze Gallery -
before reorganisation
(2000)

Bronze Gallery-
before reorganisation
(1990s)

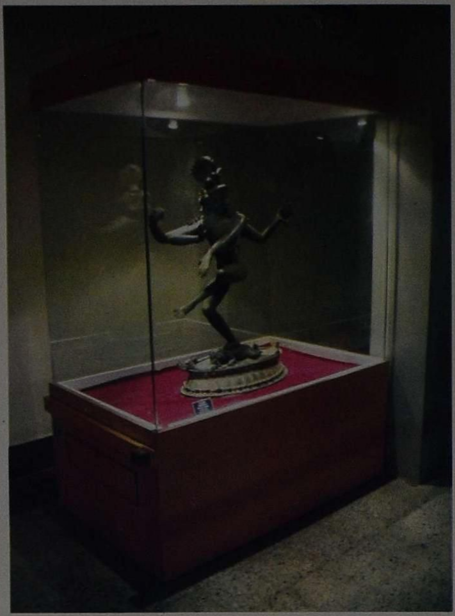
Bronze Gallery
after reorganisation -
View of Ground Floor

▲ Bronze Gallery
after reorganisation
View of First Floor

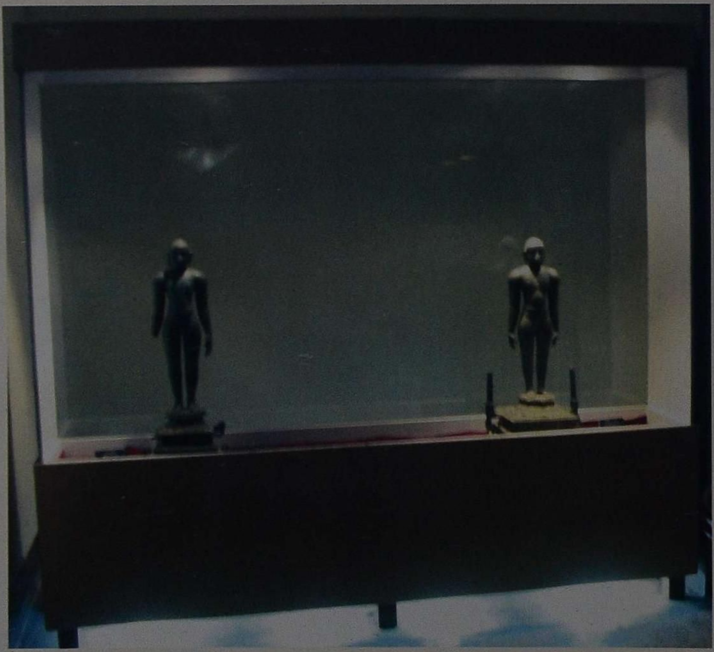
◀ Bronze Gallery - Ground Floor
Dynamic display
Ardhanariswara rotates 360°

Bronze Gallery - Ground Floor
Close up view of a very large ▶
showcase (German type)

Buddha -
Bronze Gallery -
K Brand showcase



Nataraja -
Bronze Gallery -
K Brand showcase



Bronze Gallery -
Another type of K Brand showcase

CONCLUSION

This manual is an attempt to introduce the the magnificent bronzes in the collection of the Government Museum, Chennai by placing them in their cultural, historical and mythological contexts to our tourist visitor and also to kindle the curiosity of the learned scholar to delve into our research publications. Each bronze represents the conversion of metaphyscial thought into physical form. They are the product of one of the most advanced civilisations, which has spawned other advanced civilisations in the world. To give but one instance, the teachings of the *Buddha* were carried to China by *Padmasambhava. Buddhism* became the major religion of the great Chinese civilisation. *Padmasambhava* hailed from *Kancheepuram* near Chennai.

The technology of the Lost Wax process which was adopted could be replicated only at the end of the 20th Century, that too in the high cost highly sophisticated aircraft and space industry as Investment Casting. The origin of the universe with which physicists are grappling right from Einstein onwards for a unified theory has been deciphered and explained ages ago in the form of *Siva* especially *Nataraja*. The civilisation was so advanced that it could not be understood till recently, since the thoughts were esoteric to ordinary people. As science progresses, it is being more clearly understood. The scientific approach has been adopted with great exactitude in prescribing the *Lakshanas* (features or attributes) of how each deity should look like in the *Silpasastras*. It also prescribes the proportions and measurements right to the *angula* (finger phalanx length) (Alberuni, 1878). But it also gives sufficient latitude to the artisan for his imagination in the depiction of features. This shows the high degree of precision that the scientific approach had reached but it was married to art. The composition of the features varies from the *Chola* period to the *Vijayanagar* period to the present day due to this lee-way given to the sculptor. The composition of the alloy shows high proficiency in metallurgy. Bronze casting reached its *summum bonum* (peak of perfection) during the Imperial *Chola* period according to art historians.

Every great civilsation has its periods of waxing and waning. When everyone believed the world was flat, the *Rishis* and scholars like *Aryabhatta* had calculated the circumference of the earth not only around the Equator but also around the poles

accurate to such a degree that modern measurements with satellites merely confirm them. Then there was a decline. The *Chola, Pandya* and *Vijayanagar* Empires rose and declined. There was confusion when a political vacuum occurred in the 18th Century AD. It is during periods of political stability and good governance that the greatest achievements in science and art have been recorded. But this civilisation has always risen back like a phoenix. It is like the *ganda bherunda* bird of Hindu mythology, the emblem of the *Vijayanagar* Empire which does not die. It has been ridiculed by those who perceived the world from an Occidental (European) ethno-centric viewpoint during the hey-days of colonialism. They did not attempt to understand since the conquerors, who have conquered by military prowess, usually regard the conquered as inferiors. The science of the Occident was also not so well developed as now. Also, the scholars were also people who thought that they had to civilise the lesser mortals, the so called White Man's Burden. Therefore, they misrepresented ancient cultures as primitive and ridiculed them. With the benefit of hindsight we can be more understanding of them. More open-minded scholars and ordinary people of the Occident in recent years have not only marvelled at this great civilisation but want to preserve it as a precious heritage of mankind. This civilisation probably at some stage declined. It is reinventing itself. It has always done so. As Max Mueller stated it is a great octopus and absorbs everything that comes its way and then modefies it to suit its idiom. It is the only unbroken chain linked to pre-history. As Tennyson says in his poem, the Brook,

'Men may come and may go,
But I (Indian civilisation) will go on forever'.

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GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED SANSKRIT AND TAMIL TERMS

Note: Tamil terms are shown as Tamil in brackets; otherwise they may be taken as Sanskrit; certain terms and words are common to both languages.

1.	*Abhaya*	Open palm pointed upwards in pose granting protection
2.	*Abhisheka*	Ritual bath
3.	*Adithya*	Sons of *Aditi*
4.	*Advaita*	Abosulte Monism - a system of Indian philosophy which considers all things, perceived and unperceived by the eye as parts of God or *Paramatma* (Universal Soul)
5.	*Agama*	Texts of rituals governing temple worship
6.	*Agni*	flame or fire
7.	*Ahuya mudra (Ahuya varada)*	The pose of inviting the devotees by the deity in order to confer boons on them
8.	*Aiyanar*	The Lord
9.	*Alingana*	Embracing
10.	*Amruta kalasa*	Jar of nectar
11.	*Amruta*	Nectar
12.	*Anandatandava*	Dance of supreme happiness
13.	*Angula*	finger phalanx length
14.	*Anjali*	Pose of worship
15.	*Ankusa*	Goad
16.	*Anugrahamurti*	God in the iconographic form of a bestower of boons
17.	*Apasmara* (Sanskrit)	Demon (personification of ignorance)
18.	*Ardhaparyankasana*	seated posture, unlike *Padmasana*, both the feet are not placed over each other; this is the common seated posture of even common folk in South India

19. *Arumugan*	The god with six faces (other names *Muruga, Skanda*)
20. *Asana*	Sitting posture
21. *Asuras*	Evil celestials or Demons
22. *Avatar*	Incarnation
23. *Bahu valayas*	Bangle like ornament worn on the forearms
24. *Bajibandha* (Marathi language-*vajibandha*)	Armlet
25. *Bhadra peetah*	Rectangular base
26. *Bhairava*	A manifestation of a part of the power of *Siva*
27. *Bhakti*	Devotional
28. *Bha mandala*	Halo
29. *Bhandavadya*	Playing on pot drum
31. *Bhiksatanamurti*	Sage cum mendicant form of *Siva*
32 *Bhringipada*	Foot ornament
33. *Bhusparsa*	Touching the earth
34. *Bhutisakti*	Potential energy
35. *Bodhisattva*	Buddha had a number of previous births. These are told in the *Jataka* tales. He is known as (Buddha elect - *Bodhisattva*)
36. *Brahmin*	The priestly caste of Hinduism
37. *Cella*	Sanctum
38. *Chakra*	Wheel
39. *Chamara*	Fly-whisk
40. *Chamara - bearers*	Persons waving fly-whisk
41. *Chatra*	Umbrella
42. *Chin mudra*	The index finger is curled to meet the thumb, while the other three fingers are erect (symbolic of the

		alignment of the soul with the universal soul – *jeevatma* with *paramatma*)
43.	*Channavira*	An ornament consisting of 3 chains with a central leaf like pendant
44.	*Chatura*	Square *mudra* in dance
45.	*Dakshinamurti*	*Siva* in his aspect as a philosopher facing South
46.	*Damaru*	Kettledrum (Also see *Udukkai* below)
47.	*Danda*	Stick
48.	*Danda mudra*	Hand held slightly bent parallel to the ground
49.	*Darshan*	Vision
50.	*Dasavatara*	Ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu
51.	*Devas*	Celestials
52.	*Devasenapati*	The Generalissimo of the *devas* (celestials)
53.	*Dharma Chakra*	Wheel of *Dharma* or righteousness
54.	*Dhoti*	Traditional lower garment worn by men
55.	*Dhupakkal* (Tamil)	Stand for holding incense stick
56.	*Dhyana*	Meditative posture
57.	*Doha*	Shorts or short cloth i.e. the traditional *dhoti* tied up
58.	*Dola Hasta*	Hand stretched in glee with palm facing down
59.	*Dvaita*	A system of Indian Philosophy which considers the *Jeevatma* (living beings) and *Paramatma* (God) as separate
60.	*Dwibhanga*	Two bends
61.	*Gada* and *Saranga*	Mace and bow
62.	*Gajahasta*	Hand held like the trunk of an elephant (*mudra*)
63.	*Ganas*	Devas, demi-gods
64.	*Garbagraha*	Sanctum sanctorum in a temple
65.	*Garuda*	*Vishnus' vahana* or mount half kite and half man

66.	*Ghatam* (sombu in Tamil)	Vessel for storing or carrying water
67.	*Gopuras*	Temple towers
68.	*Gramadevata* (*Gramadevatai*-in Tamil)	Village deities
69.	*Haara*	Garland
70.	*Hamsa*	Swan
71.	*Idamburi*	Conch with whorls rising to the left and coiling in a clockwise direction
72.	*Jagat mata: pitarau*	Father and mother of the world
73.	*Jata*	Matted hair
74.	*Jatabhara*	Matted hair- do
75.	*Jataka* tales	Buddha had a number of previous births. These are told in the *Jataka* tales. He is known as (Buddha elect - *Bodhisattva*). This is based on incarnation and reincarnation theory.
76.	*Jata makuta*	Matted hair on the head tied in the shape of a conical crown
77.	*Jnana mudra (Chin mudra) Upadesa mudra*	The right hand held with the index and the thumb joined together like a circle while the other three fingers point upwards commonly seen in all *Dakshinamurthy* sculptures - *Chin mudra.*
78.	*Jwalakesa*	Hair-do in the form of flames on the edge
79.	*Kaala Bhairava*	One of the eight forms of *Bhairava,* one who helps to get rid of the fear of death or *Kaala*
80.	*Kalasa*	Vessel of gold, silver or copper usually to hold water
81.	*Kamandalu (Kamandala)*	Spouted vessel
82.	*Kankala damaru*	Drum with bone stick
83.	*Kankanas*	Wristlets
84.	*Kantti*	neck ornament worn by goddesses
85.	*Kapala*	Skull

86.	*Kapala mala*	Garland of skulls
87.	*Karanda makuta*	The crown is in the form of a cone with the base at an angle of 30° pointed towards the apex; this shape is supposed to resemble the neck of a peacock
88.	*Kari hasta*	See *gajahasta*
89.	*Karma*	Actions (good *Karma* or actions lead to higher states of existence)
90.	*Kartikeya*	*Siva's* son nursed by the six *Kartik* women (pleids). Also known as *Skanda, Kumara* in Sanskrit and Muruga in Tamil
91.	*Karuppan*	The dark one
92.	*Kataka mudra*	Hand in the pose of holding the stalk of a flower, usually lotus or lily
93.	*Katisutra*	Thread tied around the waist
94.	*Katyavalambita mudra*	The pose of keeping the hand on the hip
95.	*Kayotsarga*	Standing erect-posture
96.	*Kendi* (Tamil) *Kamandalu* (Sanskrit)	Spouted vessel
97.	*Kesa bandha*	Hair done as a bun
98.	*Keyuras*	Shoulder or forearm ornament
99.	*Khadga*	Short sword
100.	*Kinkini*	A chain on the legs with bells
101.	*Kirita*	Crown
102.	*Kirti mukha*	Lion's head signifying glory usually seen in arches and belt loops and ornaments
103.	*Kondai* (Tamil)	Hair-bun
104.	*Koppus*	Ornament covering the top of the tuft
105.	*Kriyasakti*	Kinetic energy
106.	*Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas*	The warrior and business castes – the upper castes of Hinduism

107.	*Kucha bandha*	Breast band
108.	*Kudamuzha* (Tamil)	playing on pot drum
109.	*Kumaran* (Tamil and Sanskrit)	The eternal youth and son of *Siva*
110.	*Kundala*	Ear ornaments
111.	*Kurinji* (Tamil)	Hill and forest country
112.	*Lakshana*	Features or attributes, used in this context to describe the features prescribed by Silpa-Sastras for deities and architectural forms like gopuras
113.	*Lalita*	Bent square mudra in dance
114.	*Lalitasana*	See Sukhasana
115.	*Lanchana*	Cognisance symbol
116.	*Linga* (Tamil and Sanskrit)	Is generally fixed on a circular or quadrangular receptacle on a pedestal known as *yoni* or *parivattom* or *avudaiyar* (Tamil)
117.	*Lola hasta*	Hand hanging down loose
118.	*Maha purusha lakshanas*	Marks of Great Beings
119.	*Maharaja leelasana*	Seated pose with the one leg folded on the seat and the other hanging in a majestic pose like a *rajah*
120.	*Makara*	Crocodile
121.	*Makara kundala*	Ear ring (ornament) in the shape of crocodile
122.	*Makaratorana*	Arch with the decorative carving of a crocodile
123.	*Makuta*	Crown
124.	*Mangala Sutra*	See *Tali*
125.	*Mantras*	Ritual chants to God
126.	*Mekhalas*	Hip ornament usually worn by women
127.	*Modaka*	Rice ball usually sweet; can also be salty; eaten in South India after offering as *Naivedya* to Lord Ganesha
128.	*Moksha*	Liberation of the soul from the cycle of births and deaths (reincarnation theory common to Hinduism,

		Buddhism and Jainism and religions of Indian origin)
129.	*Mruga*	Antelope
130.	*Mudra*	Sign usually shown on the fingers of the hand or sometimes by pose of the body
131.	*Mukha linga*	A *Sivalinga* with a face depicted on the cylindrical surface instead of the usual plain cylindrical surface only.
132.	*Mukkudai* (Tamil)	triple umbrella
133.	*Mula Nayaka*	Main Deity (also *Tirthankara*)
134.	*Murugan* (Tamil)	The most beautiful and the valiant
135.	*Muyalakan* (Tamil) *Apasmara* (Sanskrit)	Demon of ignorance
136.	*Naga*	Serpent
137.	*Nagarajas*	Cobra considered to be the King of serpents
138.	*Naivedya*	Offering of food to Gods; they do not eat but they take the spirit in the physical form
139.	*Nilakanta*	Blue neck (One of the names of *Siva*)
140.	*Nritta*	Dance
141.	*Nrittamurti*	A master of dance
142.	*Nupuras*	Anklets
143.	*Padasaras (Padasaraas)*	Anklets
144.	*Padma peetah*	Lotus pedestal
145.	*Panchamahabhootha*	Five elements - earth, water, air, fire and ether (*akasa*)
146.	*Parasu*	Axe
147.	*Parivara devata*	Associated deity
148.	*Pasa*	Noose
149.	*Patra kundalas*	Ear ring in the shape of palmyrah leaf
150.	*Patta* (Tamil)	The base band below the crown

151.	*Pattam*	An ornament
152.	*Peetah*	Base
153.	*Pitambara*	Yellow silk garment worn by *Vishnu* usually as *Dhoti* or worn as upper garment
154.	*Prabavali*	Arch above the icon or deity
155.	*Prabha*	Circular arch
156.	*Rajaleelasana*	A pose like Maharaja Leelasana
157.	*Rajo guna*	The middle state of mind where the ego persists - both good and bad exist.
158.	*Ratna kundalas*	Ear rings with precious stones set in them
159.	*Rishaba*	Sacred bull
160.	*Rishi*	Sages with spiritual powers
161.	*Rudraksha* (*Rudraksham - Tamil*)	Sacred seed of the *Rudraksha* (like rosary) tree (*Elaeocarpus sphaericus*) worn by *Saivites*
162.	*Saiva Agamas*	Texts of rituals governing temple worship in *Saivite* temples
163.	*Sakthi Ayudha*	A long rectangular shaped weapon with a triangular end given by Goddess *Parvati* to her son *Subrahmnaya* in order to kill the demon *Surapadma*
164.	*Samabhanga*	Standing erect
165.	*Samadhi*	Trance (Tamil and Sanskrit)
166.	*Samharamurti*	Terrifying aspect (destroying aspect)
167.	*Samsara*	Worldly life
168.	*Sandhya*	Evening
169.	*Sangam (Tamil* and *Sanskrit)*	Society - Here it refers to Tamil Literary Society of poets which developed Tamil presided over by the Pandya Kings - There are three Sangams, the first two considered Pre-historic and the last historic. Earlier historians used to date it from 2nd Century BC to 2nd Century AD. Now, we have evidence to take

		it nearer to this traditional history dating of 1000 BC (See Underwater Archaeology, a paper in the Museum's Journal - April 2002 - September 2002 for more details).
170.	*Sangeetha Mandapa*	Hall where music concerts are held
171.	*Sanghati*	Upper garment cloth worn in folds by *Buddha* and the *Buddhist* monks, usually seen in *Buddha* paintings and sculptures
172.	*Sankha*	Conch
173.	*Saranga*	Bow
174.	*Sardulas* (North Indian Sanskrit)	See *Yali* (South Indian Sanskrit)
175.	*Sasikala*	Crescent moon
176.	*Satva guna*	The highest state of mind where noble thoughts and good alone exists.
177.	*Sendu* (Tamil)	A stick with a crooked top
178.	*Silpasastras*	Treatises regulating the shapes of sculptures
179.	*Simha karna*	The fingers of the hand folded such that the little finger points outward, the ring finger is folded inward, the middle finger is pointed in the downward direction, the index finger is held like the little finger but points slightly downward and the thumb points straight. Literally it means leonine ear; the hand is held in an attitude of beckoning or to hold something usually a flower like lotus or lily;
180.	*Simha mukha*	Face of the lion
181.	*Simhasana*	Throne
182.	*Siraschakra (sira chakra)*	Ornament worn on the back of the hair-do (or) Hair clip on the back of hair plait
183.	*Skanda*	The transcendent
184.	*Skandhamala*	Shoulder tassels
185.	*Sraddha*	A ritual conducted on the anniversary of the death of ancestors

186.	*Sri chakra*	A complicated geometric figure consisting of two equilateral triangles; these figures have mystical qualities and are held to able to communicate and bring the benediction of the concerned gods to the place or person which / who has this figure. Usually portrayed on copper probably to get increased electrical conductivity since it connects with the cosmic and geo-magnetic field.
187.	*Srivatsa*	Triangular mole representing Goddess Lakshmi
188.	*Stapathi*	Master of traditional architecture or sculpture
189.	*Stupas*	A hemispherical dome - derived from the Sanskrit root "stup" to collect and means heap or mound usually containing relics of the Buddha
190.	*Suchi mudra*	Index finger in the pose of pointing at something
191.	*Sudarshana*	Name of the *Chakra* of Lord *Vishnu;* personified as *Sudarshana Alwar* in several sculptures in anthropomorphic form
192.	*Sukhasana*	All these are males in seated pose with one leg hanging down. For females in a similar pose, the word *lalitasana* is usually used.
193.	*Svarnakarshana bhairava*	A *bhairava* who is prayed to when wealth is sought quickly
194.	*Svarnavaikakshya*	*A type of Channavira*
195.	*Tali* (Tamil) *Mangala Sutra* (Sanskrit)	Sacred thread or chain tied around the neck of a bride at the time of her marriage by the bridegroom to signify the Sacred tie of marriage
196.	*Tamo guna*	Base instincts, thought and action
197.	*Tandava karanas*	Classical dancing poses described by Sage *Bharata* in his book *Natya Sastra* (code on classical dance)
198.	*Tarjani mudra*	Index finger pointing above
199.	*Tengalai namam*	Y shaped as against the U shape of the *Vadagalai namam*

200.	*Thevaram* and *Tiruvachagam*	Tamil devotional hymns to *Siva*
201.	*Thiruvasi* (Tamil) *Prabavali* (Sanskrit)	The arch around the icons
202.	*Tilaka*	Vermilion mark in the centre of the forehead of unmarried and married ladies and all men. Not to be used for widows.
203.	*Tirthankara*	Jain Saint who has reached the highest state of spiritual evolution
204.	*Todus* (Tamil)	Ear ornaments
205.	*Tomara*	Club
206.	*Tribhanga*	Body bent (flexed) three times at the knee, hip and neck
207.	*Tridanda*	Saintly Mendicant's staff in the shape of a straight stick on top of which is attached a U shaped bent stick in order to place the hand while in meditation
208.	*Trinetra*	Three eyes
209.	*Trisula*	Trident
210.	*Trivali*	Three folds of the skin on the stomach at the narrow waist portion usually seen in *Parvati genre* bronzes
211.	*Udarabandha*	A band of silk or gold thread worn on the stomach
212.	*Udukkai*	Kettle drum
213.	*Ugra*	Angry
214.	*Upadesa mudra*	See *Jnana mudra*
215.	*Upanishadic*	(Commentaries on the *Vedas*) philosophic works in Sanskrit considered to be some of the most advanced meta-physical thought known to mankind
216.	*Upavita*	Sacred thread
217.	*Uri (Tamil)*	Rope tied in the form of a rack in which pots can be kept
218.	*Urdhvajanu (Saivite)*	leg raised to the level of thigh

219.	*Urna*	Curl of hair between the eyebrows of the *Buddha*
220.	*Urumala*	Thigh ornament
221.	*Usnisa*	A flame like protuberance on the head of the *Buddha*, a symbol of wisdom
222.	*Utkutika*	Raising a leg, with the other leg hanging down
223.	*Uttama*	Mark of the greatest
224.	*Uttariya*	Cloth folded around the body used as upper garment
225.	*Uzhavara Padai* (Tamil)	Spud
226.	*Vadagalai namam*	Mark on the forehead in the shape of U usually worn by *Vaishnavas*
227.	*Vahana*	Vehicle
228.	*Vajibandha (Bajibandha)*	A type of *keyuras*
229.	*Vajra Ayudha*	A weapon portrayed as shaped like two *trisuls* placed one pointing upward and the other pointing downward; the weapon of *Indra*, the chief of the *Devas* - thunderbolt
230.	*Valampuri* conch (Tamil)	Conch with whorls rising to the right and coiling in an anti-clockwise direction
231.	*Valamsuli Vinayaka* (Tamil)	*Ganesa* with his trunk turned to the right
232.	*Valayas* (Tamil and Sanskrit)	Bangles
233.	*Vamana*	God Vishnu in his incarnation of a dwarf
234.	*Varada*	Open palm pointed downwards in pose granting boons
235.	*Varaha*	*Boar*
236.	*Vastra*	cloth
237.	*Vatuka bhairava*	A Bhairava who is always depicted with a dog; he was created by lord *Siva* to punish *Brahma*
238.	*Veena*	String cum plucking musical instrument used in Carnatic (South Indian) music

239.	*Veerasana*	Seated usually on a pedestal with one leg folded and the other hanging down. This is distinguished from *Sukhasana* by the presence of rigidity in this posture
240.	*Vel*	The spear
241.	*Vismaya*	Hand held with fingures pointed upwards as if holding something - a pose (*mudra*) to show wonder
242.	*Vrishabha*	See *Rishaba*
243.	*Yadavas*	Cowhard clansmen of Lord *Krishna*
244.	*Yagna*	Ritual sacrifice in which oblations are poured into a sacred fire. The altar is constructed in accordance with principles of advanced mathematics and represents a high level of philosophical thought. The oblations are carried to the *Devas* or Gods in the form of spirit or ether. Vedic mantras are chanted appropriate to each *yagna*
245.	*Yagnopavita*	A sacred thread
246.	*Yaksha*	Tree spirits were called *Yaksha* initially;Male attendant deity of *Tirthankara* in Jain context; attendant deity of the Buddha; in Hinduism later they are considered as demi-gods
247.	*Yakshi*	Female counterpart of *Yaksha*
248.	*Yali*	Mythical animal - *yali* figure (mythical animal with the face of a lion and the trunk of an elephant - some say they existed but are now extinct)
249.	*Yoga*	Meditation
250.	*Yoga patta*	A band used by great teachers to keep their legs in a particular pose during their *yoga* practice